

Hafa Adai!

'We do not need to continue a tradition that promotes addiction and death.' **PAGE 2**
DYS kicks off Child Abuse and Neglect awareness month. **PAGE 3**

\$1

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IN GUAM-CNMI VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

Leon Guerrero requests Biden to include PH

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Leon Guerrero

Guam Gov. Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero and Guam Lt. Gov. Joshua F. Tenorio have requested U.S. President Joseph R. Biden to include the Philippines in the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program as an item agenda at the Trilateral Leaders' Summit on April 11, 2024.

See **REQUESTS** on Page 4

HK Airlines inaugural flight arrives April 29

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The long wait is over. Hong Kong Airlines' first flight back to Saipan since the COVID-19 pandemic is officially set to arrive at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan Interna-

tional Airport on April 29.

According to Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Leo B. Tudela, it's official, Hong Kong Airlines is set to depart Hong Kong this April 28 and will arrive on Saipan the early

See **FLIGHTS** on Page 4



KENDALL VISITS CNMI

In his first visit to the CNMI, U.S. Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall visited Saipan and Tinian. On Saipan, Kendall was greeted by Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang. They were joined by Commonwealth Ports Authority Board chair Joe Ayuyu and CPA executive director Leo B. Tudela. In their discussion, the governor and secretary talked about Air Force activities in the CNMI, including the divert airfield on Tinian, among other Air Force initiatives in the CNMI.

CNMI OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Palacios submits \$111.4M budget for FY 2025

- » **\$158.6M net estimated internal resources available for general appropriation**
- » **A 3% reduction from the current fiscal year budget**
- » **Positive indicators of a modest recovery seen**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios submitted last Monday to the Legislature a proposed \$111.4-million budget for the government and related agencies' operations for fiscal year 2025, which is about \$2.8 million less than the \$114.2-million budget for FY 2024.

Palacios said the net estimated internal resources reported by the Department of Finance available for general appropriation for FY 2025 are \$158,614,274, a 3% reduction from the current fiscal year budget.

He said of this total, \$47,140,263 is set aside for special earmarks, the minimum annual payment to retirees, See **BUDGET** on Page 4

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has disclosed that the administration will suspend the voluntary payment of the 25% pension benefits for all government retirees if the Senate



Palacios

will not pass by April 15, 2024 a bill will appropriate \$5.2

million of the dividends collected by the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. for such payment.

Palacios said in an interview. See **RETIREES** on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS

Senior finance and central bank officials from Southeast Asia and major economies met Thursday in the scenic Laotian city of Luang Prabang to discuss ways to help the region build resilience against shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters brought on by climate change.

PAGE 11

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

If you're nowhere near the path of totality or if clouds spoil your view, you can still catch the total solar eclipse online.

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LIFE & STYLE

Kiss has sold their catalog, brand name and IP to Swedish company Pophouse Entertainment Group in a deal estimated to be over \$300 million, it was announced Thursday.

PAGE 15



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Local

'We don't need to continue tradition that promotes addiction, death'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Oral cancer is the third most common type of cancer in the CNMI today and 73 oral cancer survivors registered with the Commonwealth Cancer Association between 2020 and 2024, according to CCA.

"We honor the 33 who are no longer with us," said cancer survivor Melvin

Manahane in reading a proclamation for Oral Cancer Awareness Month yesterday at the Office of the Governor's conference room.

CCA found that the leading cause of oral cancer in the CNMI is chewing betel nut.

Manahane said betel nut and tobacco, both of which are class I carcinogens, are often introduced at a young age and consumption contin-

» **73 oral cancer survivors registered with CCA between 2020 and 2024**

ues into adulthood.

Manahane said according to the Non-Communicable Diseases & Risk Factor Hybrid Report, one in three high

school students in the CNMI reports chewing betel nut, and one in five adults currently chew betel nut.

He said of those who chew, 88% add cigarettes to their mix.

About 25% of adults in the CNMI currently smoke cigarettes.

Manahane said only 30% of adults in the CNMI reported having a dental visit from

2022 to 2023.

"Whereas, we don't expect cancer, so oral cancer is often detected in its later stages, reducing the five-year survival rate from 83.7% to 38.5% and increasing the odds of cancer recurring (National Library of Medicine, 2022)," he said.

Dr. Angelica Sabino, who is the chief dentist for the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., said it is through her experience moving back home in 2016, that he has seen many people who have suffered from oral cancer in the CNMI.

Sabino said prior to her returning home she has not seen any oral cancer lesion at all.

"Many of us, if not all of us have been affected by oral

cancer. We know someone who has oral cancer, who is a survivor of oral cancer, who has passed away from oral cancer. Whether it be a family member, a friend or an acquaintance," she said.

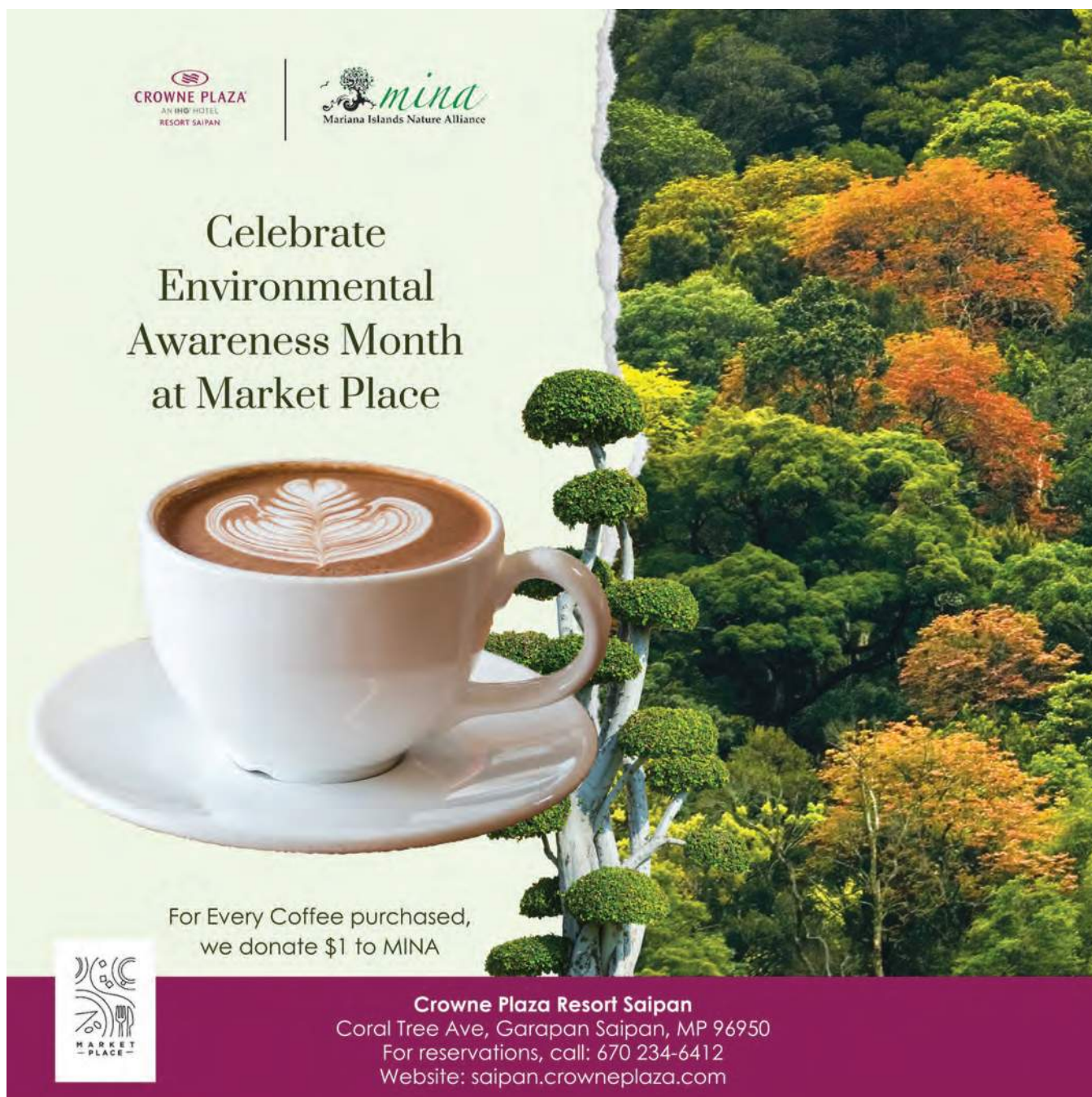
Sabino said oral cancer is a beast that is taking the livelihood of the community.

She said it is a community disease as affects the community economically, socially, and physically.

Sabino said patients who returned from surgical treatment often are ashamed of their appearance, their speech, and other physical changes that is not considered normal to them.

She said physically, patients

See **TRADITION** on Page 3



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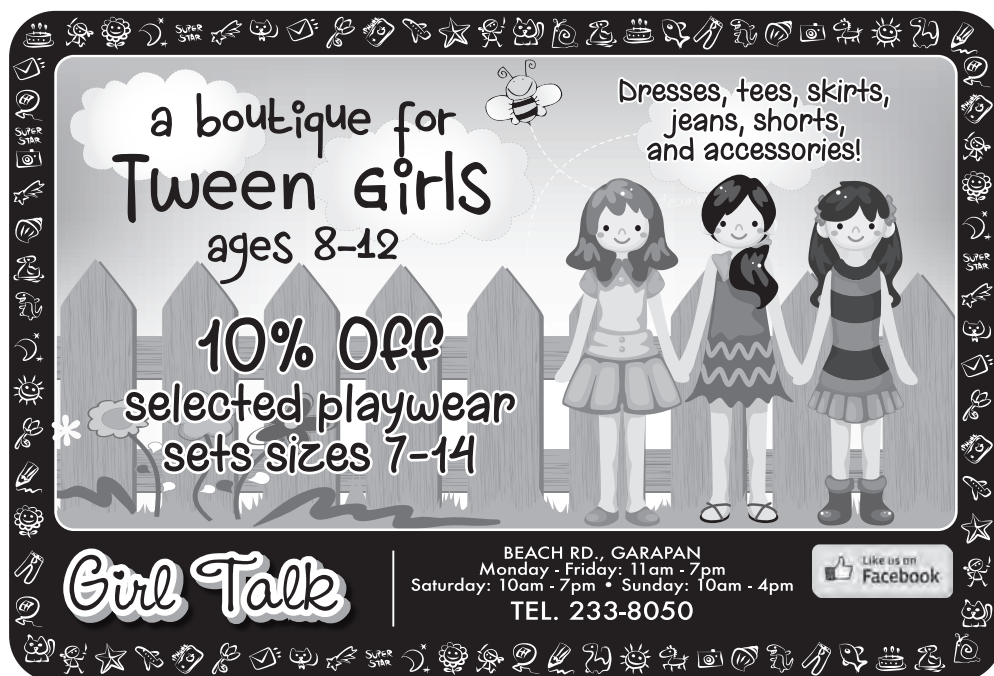
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TRADITION

From page 2

who are treated often have problems caring for their teeth, have speech impediment, unable to eat properly, and the disfigurement that they have makes life harder.

"We use a tradition, culture as a reason why we continue to chew," she said.

Sabino said people in the CNMI have other cultural norms that they can promote—respect for elders, their dances, their language.

"We do not need to continue a culture that promotes addiction and death. A culture that continues to cause our community to suffer," she said.

Sabino said oral cancer is preventable, but the CNMI's

statistic does not show this fact.

"Why? Because we have not addressed this problem aggressively," she pointed out.

Sabino said as leaders of the community, she believes they are not doing enough to help decrease the prevalence of oral cancer in the islands.

She underscored the need to educate the community on the reality that chewing betel nut with tobacco especially causes cancer.

Sabino said they have to seek means to prevent the youth from starting this habit through early education of its danger.

"We have to encourage our community to have a better healthy lifestyle to develop healthy habits and to involve agencies also to address the mental health aspect of this

cancer," she said.

Sabino said the people are fortunate because all the dental clinics in the CNMI have offered cancer screening as a free service to the community.

Jocelyn Deleon Guerrero, who is the president of the CCA board of directors, said CCA is committed to actively raise awareness and not just oral cancer, but all types of cancer. Deleon Guerrero said in today's world the word cancer has become prevalent in the society.

"No one is immune from cancer and that it does not discriminate. Cancer doesn't care what your age, your gender or what ethnicity you are," she said.

The CCA board of directors president said the sad truth of the matter is that all have

someone close to them or know someone who was fighting their battle with cancer, or sadly, has lost their fight to this horrific disease.

Deleon Guerrero said April is Oral Cancer Awareness Month and the CCA in partnership with oral health-care advocates feel that it is very important to educate their clients and loved ones regarding the risks and precautions they can all take to help find, treat and beat this devastating disease.

"We will continue to work hard to provide hope, education, and awareness in our community," she said.

Deleon Guerrero also shared about the return of their signature fundraising event, the Marianas March Against Cancer.

"After four years of hiatus and MAC is back!" said Deleon Guerrero, adding that the event will be held on May 3, 2024 at the airport field.

In signing the proclamation, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios said he and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang call upon all citizens of the Commonwealth to unite in battle against oral cancer.

"With unwavering resolve, let us shatter the barriers of fear and denial, exert control over harmful habits such as betel nut and tobacco use, educate our youth, prioritize regular screenings, and seize this month as our opportunity to enact meaningful change in the fight against oral cancer," Palacios said.

Apatang said he is also a cancer survivor and that his wife passed away from cancer seven years ago.

Apatang said he is still continuing to take care of himself, taking care of his body, and being careful what he consumes.

He urged CCA to continue to promote, educate the community about oral cancer.

Apatang said all those businesses that are selling betel nut are making money but betel nut is not doing anything good to the people.

He said he hates seeing people especially chewing betel nut and spitting it out in the community.

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RETIREEES

From page 1

interview on Wednesday that he, however, is confident that the Senate will act on the legislation because when they had a meeting recently discussing the payment of 25% pension,

Senate President Edith E. De-Leon Guerrero (D-Saipan), and Sens. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota), Corina L. Magofna (Ind-Saipan), Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), and Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) were present.

“So I know that they understand and I appreciate

that most, if not all of the Senate members also know the urgency of this if we are to continue to accommodate the 25%,” he said, adding that he is hoping that the Senate will act expeditiously on the legislation.

The House of Representatives fast-tracked the passage

last March 28 of the legislation, House Bill 23-104, House Draft 1, which was introduced on that same day by Rep. Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan).

Attao stated shortly before the legislation was unanimously voted on, that if the Legislature does not act on it,

25% of retirees’ pension will be reduced, if not suspended, by April 15, 2024.

Attao said recently, both the House and Senate met with the administration, which informed them that the CNMI is in bad financial straits.

He said a lot of the retir-

ees’ 25% pension are being paid out using the reprogramming authority of the administration, but unfortunately, the funds are being depleted.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

BUDGET

From page 1

and payment of debt service obligations.

The governor said the net available resources for government operations, amounting to \$111,474,011, are

allocated among the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches, inclusive of the 25% for the Public School System.

The total projected revenues are \$62.3 million from Business Gross Revenue Tax, \$33.6 million from income taxes, \$50.2 million other taxes, \$9.5 million from fees,

\$1.4 million from charges for services, and \$1.3 million for other revenue, or for a total of \$158.6 million in identified gross budgetary resources.

Palacios said they will continue to monitor events and fiscal conditions that might affect the underlying assumptions and consideration

of their proposed budget for FY 2025 and will inform the Legislature of any changes and proposed amendments as appropriate.

The governor stressed that it is critical that the Legislature consider new revenue-generating measures and pass them expeditiously so that they can

be in a stronger position to deliver the public services that the people of the Commonwealth deserve.

He said in preparing this budget proposal, the administration has had to make difficult decisions that preserve essential services while also recognizing the need for prudent financial management.

“We understand the chal-

lenges we face. It is important that we work together strategically and collaboratively to face these head-on, not through band-aid fixes but through creative solutions and a firm commitment to long-term growth,” Palacios said.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

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REQUESTS

From page 1

“We both recognize the invaluable contributions made by Filipinos to our communities, which are vital in strengthening our diverse cultural tapestry and our ties with the broader Pacific region,” said Leon Guerrero and Tenorio in a letter to Biden on Monday.

The first Trilateral Leaders’ Summit of the Philippines, Japan, and the United States will discuss expanded security and economic cooperation. Biden will host Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and Japan Prime Minister Kishida Fumio at the White House for the summit.

Leon Guerrero and Tenorio noted that in U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken’s recent trip to the Philippines, he and Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo underscored the im-

portance of their shared priorities for economic growth and cooperation.

They said expanding the Guam-CNMI visa waiver program by including the Philippines would support these efforts.

Leon Guerrero and Tenorio said this is timely as they met with a CNMI delegation consisting of lawmakers from the Senate and House of Representatives earlier this month to discuss a variety of shared interests, which included adding the Philippines to the Guam-CNMI visa waiver program.

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) said yesterday that they are grateful for the strong working relationship they have with the leaders of Guam and look forward to their next meetings which include tackling affordable travel and shipping between the islands.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

FLIGHTS

From page 1

morning of April 29.

CPA Lease Compliance officer Joy Tenorio added that Hong Kong Airlines has already started preparations in Saipan and is getting ready to open its terminal at the Saipan international airport.

Saipan Tribune learned that the Marianas Visitors Authority and other community stakeholders are set to give Hong Kong Airlines a warm, island welcome when they arrive on April 29.

According to the airline’s Hong Kong-Saipan flight schedule, Hong Kong Airlines will be providing two weekly flights: The Hong Kong to Saipan flights will be every Thursday and Sunday, departing Hong Kong at 7:35pm and arriving on Saipan at 2:35am. The airline’s Saipan to Hong Kong flights will be every

Monday and Friday, departing Saipan at 4:05am.

The return of Hong Kong Airlines has been in the works since last year, but the exact date of the airline’s return has always been tentative. Initially, it was to relaunch its Saipan route in November 2023. When that didn’t happen, CNMI stakeholders were informed that the return of Hong Kong Airlines had been moved to February, but the relaunch was postponed anew to March.

The airline suspended its Hong Kong-Saipan flights back in 2020 and will return after an over three-year hiatus. This time, it will be using a A330 aircraft, which has 280 seats per flight.

MVA managing director Chris Concepcion previously said MVA is optimistic that Hong Kong Airlines will further boost the CNMI’s tourism industry as there is a pent-up demand for travel in the area.

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DYS kicks off Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Month

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Division of Youth Services, which kicked off its annual Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Month activities yesterday, is putting a twist on this year's festivities.

According to DYS director Vivian Sablan, this year the division wanted to do things differently by focusing on reaching out to families and children.

"One of our highlights of the year is coming up which is our Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Month campaign activities. That will kick off with a proclamation signing at the Capitol Hill Softball field. It will be followed by our first Strike-out Child Abuse softball tournament which is going to be happening throughout the weekend. We're doing things a little bit differently this time, we're trying to reach out to as many of the families and children. It's always nice

to have a proclamation signing in doors but as much as we appreciate our partners, we want to be able to reach out to our target population," she said.

Sablan also added that this year, DYS representatives will be featured on local radio stations throughout the month to talk about child abuse in hopes of further raising awareness.

"Part of our outreach is to get on radio stations every Tuesday morning from 8am to 9am where we will be talking about physical abuse, neglect, what supportive services we can provide, we're also going to be breaking down our data and also talking about mandated reporters and some of our presentations we make available to both mandated reporters and the public and private schools," she said.

Lastly, DYS will also be doing roadside wavings every Friday of this month.

"We will be conducting roadside waving every Friday morning from 7:30am to 8am. The first roadside waving will be across the Marianas High

School," she said.

In a statement from DCCA Secretary Francisco M. Rabauliman, he said it is important to raise awareness about child abuse and neglect as it is a growing problem in the CNMI.

"The whole idea here is to create awareness on child abuse and neglect. It's an increasing problem for the community and I think the more we educate and the more we disseminate information, the more the community is prepared to respond to these kinds



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Division of Youth Services director Vivian Sablan.

of incidences," he said.

Previously DYS reported that after comparing the number of child abuse and neglect cases from fiscal year 2020 and 2023, the number of incidences reported have doubled with DYS currently tending to over 1,000 child abuse victims.

Sablan shared that for the past few years, DYS has been maintaining consistent child abuse and neglect reports since FY2020 adding that when comparing the number of cases from FY2020 to FY2023, the numbers are alarming.

Specifically, in FY2020, DYS received 271 child abuse and neglect cases. Meanwhile, in FY2023, DYS had 459 cases. With the 459 cases, DYS is currently trending to 1,214 child abuse victims.

Breaking down the number of cases in FY 2023; DYS received 245 emotional abuse cases, 202 neglect cases, 115 physical abuse cases, 103 sexual abuse cases, and 148 other cases (this includes domestic violence, minor sex trafficking, truancy, teen pregnancy, etc.).

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QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE BROADBAND POLICY & DEVELOPMENT BY APRIL 11, 2024, TO MRS. MELIA JOHNSON VIA EMAIL AT mejohnson@dof.gov.mp OR MRS. DARLENE DU BRALL VIA EMAIL AT d.dubral@dof.gov.mp
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The IFB will be issued and available for pick-up beginning March 15, 2024, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, at the Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Building, Saipan International Airport. CPA offices are closed on its austere days and holidays. The IFB includes a layout and requirements. All responses to this IFB shall also take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged to the bidder awarded the contract for the project. Prospective bidders will be required to pay an administrative fee of \$100.00 for costs associated with handling and consideration of the bid.
Questions and/or clarification concerning this project shall be in writing and sent to the attention of the Executive Director through email at cpa.admin@pticom.com with copy to Joy Ann Tenorio at joy.tenorio@cnmiports.com no later than April 2, 2024.
All bids shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: **"INVITATION FOR BID SUBMISSION: CONFIDENTIAL, AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE SERVICES, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY CPA-IFB-006-24"** One (1) original and two (2) copies of the bid must be submitted no later than **3:00 p.m. Chamorro Standard Time, April 18, 2024**, to the Authority Administration Section, Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport.
Bids will be opened on April 18, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. at the Meeting Room, Saipan International Airport. Bids are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee. The concessions are for the right to provide Automated Teller Machine services at a certain designated location within the Saipan International Airport for a period of five (5) years and requires the concessionaire to operate such concession to the satisfaction of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.
The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so, would be in CPA's best interest. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All bids shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.
FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director
Date

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS
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PROJECT NO. CPA-RFQ-001-24
The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).
In collaboration with the Office of the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, CPA is continuing its modernization initiatives of the CNMI's air and seaports through the identification, development, implementation, and completion of major capital improvement plan (CIP) projects that will further enhance the air and seaports' resiliency, sustainability and core capabilities.
Therefore, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested Consultants for Owners/Agent Engineer (OAE) Services with the intent to provide CPA professional services and technical support in the areas of design and engineering services, program management support, financial consulting and analysis, and other related services specific to the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, the Francisco Manglona Borja/Tinian International Airport, the Benjamin Manglona Taisacan International Airport, the Port of Saipan, the Rota West Harbor, and the Tinian Harbor.
The project is being funded by a grant from the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) and is in accordance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.
The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at email address wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Nora Vincent at receptionist@cnmiports.com.
Questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted to Ms. Wendi Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2024**.
Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their qualification statements no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2024**. All proposals shall be addressed to the attention of CPA's Executive Director, Mr. Leo B. Tudela. Additionally, proposals transmitted via facsimile or email will not be accepted.
The professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria provided in the RFQ package.
Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330. Additional supporting documents that complement the qualification statements are encouraged.
The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all qualification statements for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.
LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director
Date: March 14, 2024

Name: Zihang Zhang
Address: P.O. Box 1001, PMB 466
Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 588-2778
Pro Se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
In the Matter of J FCD CN CIVIL
the Petition for J CIVIL ACTION
the Change of J NO. 24-0118
Name of: J
J **NOTICE OF HEARING**
Zihang Zhang J
Petitioner J

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on May 6, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 217A, before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.
Dated this 2nd day of April 2024.
Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Ronald L. Sison J FCD-DI CIVIL
Petitioner, J ACTION NO.
vs. J 22-0371
Brando L. Sison J **SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION**
Respondent, J
TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT:
YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is file with the Court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 504351 Saipan MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.
Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this Summons, Judgement by Default may be taken against you for relief in the Complaint.
Dated this 13th day of March, 2024.
/s/
Dep. Clerk of Court

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSING
P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 11925 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: info@cnmilicensing.gov.mp
Website: www.cnmilicensing.gov.mp

Pursuant to P. L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Board of Professional Licensing (BPL) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its quarterly board meeting on **Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 8:30 a.m.** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Administration Building, Governor's Conference Room, on Capitol Hill, Saipan.
AGENDA
I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (11/29/2023)
V. Public Comments
VI. Chairperson's Report
VII. Director's Report
A. Financial Report
B. Online Payment - Localgov
C. Ad Hoc Committee to Review and Update Board Regulations for Engineers, Architects, Land Surveyors, and Landscape Architects
VIII. Investigator's Report
IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
A. Governor's Office
B. Legislature
X. Old Business
XI. New Business
XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
XIII. Miscellaneous Business
A. NCARB 2024 Annual Business Meeting - Paid and Voting Delegates
XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
XV. Announcements
A. Next Meeting Date
B. Adjournment of Meeting

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD
P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: info@cnmilicensing.gov.mp • Website: www.cnmilicensing.gov.mp

Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPPLB), hereby give notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, at 8 a.m. on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Board of Professional Licensing Conference Room, BPL Building on Capitol Hill.
AGENDA
I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (03/13/2024)
V. Public Comments
VI. Chairperson's Report
VII. Director's Report
1. Financial Report
VIII. Investigator's Report
IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
A. Governor's Office
B. Legislature
1. Letter from EAGI Chairwoman, Senator Celina R. Babauta Re Senate Confirmation Hearing for Dr. Martin Rohringer
X. Old Business
XI. New Business
XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
XIII. Miscellaneous Business
XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
XV. Announcements
A. Next Meeting Date
B. Adjournment of Meeting

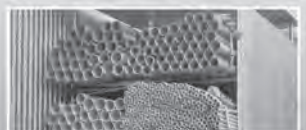


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FAX: 288-4488
E-mail: guangdong_hardware@163.com

BUSINESS HOURS:
Monday to Saturday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



Aetna Insurance is a Premier Donor for 2024 Red Cross Walkathon



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Aetna International general agent Pacifica Insurance Underwriters Inc. leadership team poses with American Red Cross-NMI Chapter staff.

Aetna International Insurance is again a premier donor for the 2024 Walkathon with a gift of \$10,000.

"We are proud and grateful for this generous gift. It enables us to carry out our humanitarian work here in the CNMI and to meet our fundraising goals for our 35th annual walkathon. The American Red Cross-NMI Chapter, Aetna, and Pacifica Insurance highly value improving lives through good health and we are honored to have them as our premier Walkathon spon-

sor again this year," said John Hirsh, executive director of the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter.

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org/nmi or call the NMI Chapter office at (670) 234-3459.

About Aetna

Aetna Inc. is an American managed health care company that sells traditional, and consumer directed health care insurance and related services, such as medical, pharmaceutical, dental, behavioral health, long-term care, and disability plans, primarily through employer-paid (fully or partly) insurance and benefit programs, and through Medicare. Since Nov. 28, 2018, the company has been a subsidiary of CVS Health. The company's network includes 22.1 million medical members, 12.7 million dental members, 13.1 million pharmacy benefit management services members, 1.2 million health-care professionals, over 690,000 primary care doctors and specialists, and over 5,700 hospitals. (PR)

TINIAN FUEL SERVICES, INC.

PO Box 520800, Tinian, MP 96952
Tel. (670) 433-4428 • Fax. (670) 433-4427

Tinian Fuel Services, Inc. has an opening for:

SALES MANAGER (1)

DUTIES: Direct and coordinate activities involving sales of products, services or other subjects of sale. Resolve customer complaints regarding sales and services. Review operational records and reports to project sales and determine profitability. Determine price schedule and discount rates. Monitor customer preferences to determine focus of sales efforts. Direct, coordinate, and review activities in sales and service accounting and record-keeping, and in receiving and shipping operations.

QUALIFICATIONS: Required to have bachelor's degree major in Accountancy with 24 months of work-related skills, experience, and knowledge. Required to have an occupation in Sales Managing. Required college diploma, transcript of records and computer skills (Microsoft Office).

WORKSITE LOCATION: San Jose Village, Tinian; Salary: \$16.70/Hour; Work Hours: Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 4:30pm; Overtime Available at 1.5 x base rate/hour; Frequency of Pay: Bi-Weekly; Deductions: All applicable CNMI and Federal Taxes; Benefits: Worker's compensation is provided.

CLOSING DATE: April 26, 2024

Interested applicants may submit their resume personally (walk-in) at our office located in San Jose Village, Tinian Tel No.: (670) 433-4428 or by emailing us their resume at service@tinianservice.com. Applicants may apply during weekdays only, Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 4:30pm, excluding national holidays.

TINIAN FUEL SERVICES, INC.

PO Box 520800, Tinian, MP 96952
Tel. (670) 433-4428 • Fax. (670) 433-4427

Tinian Fuel Services, Inc. has an opening for:

ACCOUNTING CLERK (1)

DUTIES: Compute, classify, and record numerical data to keep financial records complete. Perform any combination of routine calculating, posting, and verifying duties to obtain primary financial data for use in maintaining accounting records. May also check the accuracy of figures, calculations, and postings to business transactions recorded by other workers. Operate computers programmed with accounting software to record, store and analyze information.

QUALIFICATIONS: Four-year bachelor's degree major in management and accounting. Required college diploma, transcript of records and computer skills (Microsoft Office). Required to have 24 months of work-related skills, experience, knowledge and work.

WORKSITE LOCATION: San Jose Village, Tinian; Salary: \$11.21 to \$14.00/Hour; Work Hours: Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 4:30pm; Overtime Available at 1.5 x base rate/hour; Frequency of Pay: Bi-Weekly; Deductions: All applicable CNMI and Federal Taxes; Benefits: Worker's compensation is provided.

CLOSING DATE: April 26, 2024

Interested applicants may submit their resume personally (walk-in) at our office located in San Jose Village, Tinian Tel No.: (670) 433-4428 or by emailing us their resume at service@tinianservice.com. Applicants may apply during weekdays only, Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 4:30pm, excluding national holidays.



DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950 • Gualo Rai Center, Saipan
TEL. NO. 664-8300 FAX NO. 664-8315 • www.dcrm.gov.mp



NOTICE OF APPLICATION

As of April 05, 2024

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

NO.	APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1.	Mariana Islands Nature Alliance (MINA)	03/01/2024 SSLR-2024-030	Typhoon Debris Shoreline & In-Water Clean-Up	Island-Wide, Saipan	Shoreline and Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 03/28/2024
2.	Fengyi Zhang Williams dba Big Shark Marine Sports	03/11/2024 SLR-2024-032	Commercial Water Jet Craft & Banana Boat Operations and Kayaking & Snorkeling Activities	Susupe, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 03/28/2024
3.	Success International Corporation dba M&R Construction/Contractor	03/13/2024 SPI-2024-033	Land Clearing	Tanapag, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Approved* 03/27/2024
4.	FSM Recycling Corporation	03/13/2024 SPI-2024-034	Land Clearing	Tanapag, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Approved* 03/27/2024
5.	Mariana Global, Inc.	03/18/2024 SSLRm-2024-035	Renovation of the Managaha R.O. System Storage Building	Managaha Island	Shoreline, Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 03/28/2024
6.	Department of Community and Cultural Affairs - Commonwealth Council for Arts & Culture (DCCA-CCAC)	03/19/2024 SSm-2024-036	43rd Annual Flame Tree Arts Festival	Garapan, Saipan	Shoreline	Approved* 04/02/2024
7.	Katarina Saipan 1 L.L.C dba Shawn Dive	03/28/2024 SLR-2023-089-R2	Commercial SCUBA Diving Tour	Garapan, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Certified Complete* 04/03/2024
8.	Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation (NMNPSF)	03/28/2024 SCH-2024-037	Installation of Two (2) Single Story Pre-Fabricated Storage Container Units	Susupe, Saipan	Coastal Hazards	Certified Complete* 04/04/2024

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

Palacios expands digital resilience, innovation, and ingenuity for CNMI's long-term growth

Since assuming office, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has focused on bridging the digital gap and stimulating economic growth through technological advancements, laying the groundwork necessary for a thriving digital economy built on resilience, innovation, and ingenuity.

"One year ago, I committed to shaping a brighter digital future for the people of the Northern Mariana Islands," Palacios said. "Today, I take pride in the strides we've taken to establish a foundation for a flourishing digital economy, emphasizing resilience, innovation, and ingenuity that will benefit generations to come."

Key advances in CNMI's digital evolution

■ Establishment of the Broadband Policy and Development Office: Shortly after taking office, Palacios set up this specialized office to oversee infrastructure enhancements throughout the CNMI, significantly reducing the digital disparity with a long-term vision in mind.

■ Secured funding for broadband infrastructure: Obtaining a substantial fivefold increase in federal broadband funding, Palacios has paved the way for accelerated infrastructure enhancements and broader internet accessibility across the islands, recognizing the massive investments needed for future prosperity.

■ Upcoming fiber-to-the-home network: Plans are in progress for a cutting-edge fiber-to-the-home network that will span the CNMI. Funded entirely by federal grants, this ambitious initiative aims to bring high-speed internet

directly to residents' homes within the next four years, highlighting the importance of seizing opportunities during tough economic times.

■ Discounted satellite internet access: Following successful advocacy, Starlink expanded its satellite internet coverage to include the CNMI. Since November 2023, residents of CNMI have had the opportunity to access satellite internet at a reduced rate compared to mainland U.S., fostering digital inclusion for even the most extremely remote areas and providing redundancy for our entire community.

■ Development of trans-Pacific submarine cable landings: Actively pursuing negotiations for trans-Pacific submarine fiber optic cable landings in the CNMI, Palacios anticipates positive outcomes in the coming months. This pivotal infrastructure will offer unmatched internet connectivity, drawing in businesses and fostering economic progress with an eye on creating opportunities during challenging times.

New developments

■ The CNMI spearheads nationwide BEAD Planning: The CNMI is leading the way in the nationwide BEAD Planning effort, achieving nine out of 10 planning milestones and nearing BEAD program implementation. The recent approval of the CNMI BEAD Initial Proposal Volume 1 by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration marks significant progress, with Volume 2 approval expected within the next month.

■ Digital Equity Initia-



From left to right, Glen Hunter, special assistant, Broadband Policy and Development; Gov. Arnold I. Palacios; Ethan Lake, National Telecommunications and Information Administration federal program officer for Pacific Territories; and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang.

tives: In addition to digital infrastructure advancements, the CNMI is actively working on Digital Equity Initiatives to bridge the digital divide for all residents. The Commonwealth's 5-year Digital Equity Action Plan is currently open for public comment at bpd.cnmi.gov and will be transmitted for approval to the NTIA later this year.

■ Comprehensive Cyber Security Plan: The CNMI has also developed and received approval for a comprehensive Cyber Security plan from the federal government. This plan

is designed to ensure a safe and secure digital environment for the Commonwealth, supported by funding to enhance cybersecurity measures.

Palacios emphasized, "These accomplishments signify a significant stride towards a future where every island resident can access the digital realm. We are dedicated to constructing a robust digital framework that unlocks new prospects for education, healthcare, business expansion, and overall prosperity for the CNMI, recognizing that these massive investments will take time but will bring lasting benefits for generations to come." (PR)

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW24-ITB No.: 42400078

SUBMISSION DATE: May 08, 2024 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"Gagu/Banalu Street Road
Improvement Project."**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **April 05, 2024** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **April 23, 2024, 9:00 a.m., ChST** at the **Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan**. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **4:30 p.m. local time on April 30, 2024** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
Acting Director, Division of
Procurement Services

Mount Carmel School
"Educating the whole person to see with Christ's eyes."

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

ONE (1) MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES:
To provide classroom instruction at the grade level(s) (middle school levels) and in the subject area(s) assigned. To maintain accurate and complete records of each student's academic progress. To submit daily student attendance reports. To submit weekly lesson plans for the next week's instruction. To provide supervision of students during daily break time and lunch hour, and after school while students are waiting for their transportation or during any planned after school activities. To assist with student supervision at school related co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. To perform satisfactorily the duties assigned and to maintain a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. To support the Catholic Identity of the school by attendance at religious functions. To begin each class period with a prayer. To teach in harmony with the philosophy and Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs) and in conformity with the rules and regulations stated in the School Handbook. To attend and participate in parent/teacher organization meetings. To attend and participate in faculty meetings during and after school hours, and in other professional development meetings as might be called by the school administration. To perform all other duties relating to the school's operation this may be assigned by the Vice Principal/Principal.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:

- Bachelor's Degree in Education or Elementary School Education. Foreign equivalence is acceptable; and
- Must have at least 24 months experience teaching in a classroom setting.

Working Conditions: Full-time (40 hours per week).
Location: Mount Carmel School, Inc. P.O. Box 500006, Knight Street, Chalan Kanoa, Saipan, MP 96950

Interested individuals please send your resume with a list of references, photocopy of a valid photo identification card & updated police clearance to:

John Blanco, Business Manager
 Mount Carmel School, Inc.
 P.O. Box 500006
 Knight Street, Chalan Kanoa
 Saipan, MP 96950
 Contact no. 670-234-6184
 E-mail: businessmanager@mcsknights.com

WE ARE AN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Building Maintenance & Repairer
 (Saipan, MP)

Monitor, repair, install, and perform routine maintenance of building and building equipment. Perform maintenance of electrical systems such as replace light bulbs and sockets, clean and repair circuit breaker panels etc. Assist in the setup of ventilation, refrigeration and generators, water heater, and conduct repairs when necessary. Do preventative maintenance programs and procedures. Maintain heating and plumbing systems to ensure functionality. Install, monitor, and inspect alarm systems (fire, protection) and schedule repairs when needed. Perform manual repairs when necessary such as fix locks, replace windows or doors, etc. Conduct general upkeep procedures and other tasks as assigned such as painting, carpentry, and plumbing. Install and monitor CCTV functionality, fire exit lights, fire alarms, fire extinguishers and do repair or replacement if needed. Respond to emergencies, including but not limited to; structural problems, equipment failures, plumbing and electrical issues, fire alarms, and power failures at all hours. Develop, implement, and maintain both routine and specialized maintenance schedules. Prepare repair cost documentation including material lists, labor estimates, and repair schedules. Monitor building safety and ensure compliance with CNMI & Federal codes and regulations. Prepare and maintain records of repairs and maintenance. Perform related tasks as required.

Minimum Requirements: High School graduate with 2-year experience in the position.

Send updated Resume & supporting credentials to
 P&A CORPORATION ATTN: DOYI KIM, P.O. Box 506003, Saipan MP96950
saipanwinners5@gmail.com

Butcher & Meat Cutter
 (Saipan, MP)

Receive, inspect, and store meat upon delivery to ensure meat quality. Adhere to State & USDA-FSIS law, regulations, standards and all food safety regulations. Cut, trim, bone, tie, and grind meats, such as beef, pork, poultry, and fish, to prepare meat in cooking form. Cut, trim, or prepare consumer-sized portions of meat for use or sale in retail establishments. Wrap, weigh, label, and price processed meat. Prepare and place meat cuts and products in display counter, so they will appear attractive and catch the shopper's eye. Prepare special cuts of meat ordered by customers. Shape, lace, and tie roasts, using boning knife, skewer, and twine. Record quantity of meat received and/or issued to restaurants and customers. Keep and maintain records of meat delivered and sold. Cure, smoke, tenderize and preserve meat. Negotiate with companies or clients to determine order details. Do other related duties as assigned from time to time.

Minimum Requirements: High School graduate with 1-year experience in the position.

Send updated Resume & supporting credentials to Marianas Meat Harvesting Corporation ATTN: DOYI KIM, P.O. Box 506003, Saipan MP96950
marianasmeatharvesting@gmail.com or saipanwinners5@gmail.com

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP NO.: DPW24-RFP No.: 42400073

SUBMISSION DATE: April 30, 2024 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"Architectural-Engineering Services
to Provide Feasibility Study and Design
of the Proposed Maintenance Dredging at
Smiling Cove Marina, Saipan"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **March 22, 2024** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

There will be a **Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on **April 09, 2024, 9:00 a.m. ChST**, at the DLNR Conference Room, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **4:30 p.m. ChST, on April 17, 2024** to **Mr. Sylvan Q. Igisomar, Secretary of DLNR**, Saipan. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/RAY N. YUMUL
Secretary, DPW

/S/ GERALDINET E. CRUZ
Acting Director, Division of
Procurement Services

REGULAR BOARD MEETING NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41 § 11, the Northern Mariana Islands Museum of History & Culture hereby gives notice that a Regular Board of Governors Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 9:00am at the Northern Marianas Humanities Council Conference Room in Gualo Rai, Saipan.

MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Establish Quorum
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes: December 7, 2023 Meeting
5. Public Comments
6. Chairman's Report
7. Executive Director's Report
8. Executive Director Hiring Committee Report
9. Bylaws Committee Report
10. Old Business
 - a. Executive Director Recruitment
 - b. NEH Chair's Disaster Recovery Grants for Humanities Collections
11. New Business
 - a. Acting Directors' Compensation
 - b. FY 2025 Appropriations Budget Request
 - c. Citizen-Centric Reports
 - d. NMI Museum Admission Fees
 - e. NMI Museum Name Change and Reporting Line
12. Executive Session
13. Miscellaneous/Announcements
14. Adjournment

/s/ Leo Pangelinan, Chairperson
 NMI Museum Board of Governors

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The humanitarian aid Gaza needs most is a cease-fire

In Gaza, famine is imminent.

To get urgently needed food, clean water, temporary sanitation facilities and medical supplies to more than 2 million Palestinians, President Biden ordered construction of a floating dock. Building it will take weeks.

In the interim, aid trickles into the narrow strip of land between southwestern Israel and the Mediterranean. A Spanish-supplied ship from Cyprus offloaded rice and flour at a makeshift jetty formed from some of the ample rubble left by weeks of Israeli bombing. Some trucks are permitted to enter through "Gate 96," a hole in the barrier that seals off Gaza from Israel. Some food is dropped by parachute. So far it is insufficient to slow the steady advance of severe hunger.

In the northern part of Gaza, largely destroyed by the Israeli air and ground assault that followed the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that killed 1,200 Israelis, people are desperate. Some have reportedly raided the few aid trucks that get in. Others were killed and seriously injured by air-dropped cargo when parachutes failed to open. Emergency aid is hardly a substitute for peace.

In the southernmost part of Gaza, in and around Rafah, hundreds of thousands who fled the Israeli strikes in the north now wait in terror—and hunger—for a threatened final assault.

The dock, welcome though it may be, is an almost perverse footnote to Biden administration policy that supplies and supports the Israeli destruction at the heart of the crisis.

By demanding an immediate and lasting cease-fire, thus permitting the return of regular supply convoys, the U.S. would save many more lives and stave off far more hunger than any number of docks and airdrops.

But the best the administration could muster Monday was an abstention in a United Nations Security Council cease-fire resolution. It represented a modest shift in policy (although Biden administration officials denied it) after three U.S. vetoes of previous resolutions.

Nearly six months into the Israel-Hamas war, more U.S. officials, including dozens of members of Congress, are belatedly demanding an end to the Gaza horror. Or, as in the case of Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.), a change in the Israeli government.

Such calls should not be mistaken as support for the religio-fascist Hamas regime, whose brutal attack began this latest tragedy, and which continues to hold more than 100 hostages.

It is high time for Biden to acknowledge that there are at least three parties in the Gaza disaster. Israel of course is one. Hamas is another.

Palestinians just trying to avoid starvation are a third.

It may be convenient for the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to pretend that Hamas combatants and innocent Palestinian civilians are a single adversary, and that bombing and starving Palestinians is putting pressure on Hamas to release the hostages.

But Hamas likely has little regard for the innocents and is only too willing to permit their slaughter to further its

See GAZA on Next Page



Biden is stuck with Netanyahu. How does he move forward?

The long friendship between America and Israel faces some of the worst strains in its 76-year history. Six months into Israel's war in Gaza, the rift is creating previously unthinkable fractures. Most recently, an Israeli prime minister publicly refused a U.S. president's request to send emissaries to Washington to discuss war strategy and the appalling civilian death toll—then reversed himself.

Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu has become an increasingly polarizing figure who welcomes U.S. taxpayer dollars and weapons but not always U.S. advice. Netanyahu has divided U.S. politics, outraged Israelis, vexed American Jews and undermined global support for the Jewish state. Yet, by all accounts, he's not stepping down anytime soon.

President Joe Biden's loyalty to Israel is ironclad, but his irritation is growing. During a "hot mic" moment after his State of the Union speech, Biden memorably promised to take Netanyahu to a "come to Jesus" meeting over Israel's conduct of the war and Gaza's unfolding humanitarian catastrophe.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, the highest-ranking elected Jewish official in America, went further recently, calling Netanyahu a leader who has "lost his way" and become an obstacle to peace. The New York Democrat urged new elections in the Jewish state to save Israel. The U.S. even abstained from a United Nations Security Council cease-fire resolution last week, sending a strong signal to Israel's extreme right-wing government that U.S. patience is wearing thin.

That two of America's staunchest, longtime supporters of Israel are this frustrated is a sign of their deep concern over the horrific killing of more than 32,000 Palestinians in Gaza, two-thirds of them women and children, and also over the erosion of support for Israel due to the war. Biden said Schumer "gave a good speech" expressing concerns shared by many Americans.

In a recent Pew Research Center survey, most Americans (58%) said Israel has valid reasons for fighting Hamas, but only 1 in 5 (22%) believe the way the war is being conducted will make Israel safer.

"Biden's in a tragic cul-de-sac. He can't live with Netanyahu, and he can't live without him," said Aaron David Miller, a Middle East expert and former adviser to six secretaries of state.

"Clearly, Biden is not looking for a fight with Netanyahu," Miller told me. "The administration is pursuing a passive-aggressive approach. It is angry and upset, but Biden is focusing on reality. Does he want to make a point with Netanyahu, or make a difference? You can't do this by turning the current prime minister of Israel into a pariah."

The longest-serving prime minister in Israel's history — who remains on trial on allegations of fraud, bribery and breach of trust — has seen his popularity with Israelis plummet and was recently called Israel's worst leader by prominent Israeli journalist and author

By STORER H. ROWLEY
Chicago Tribune

Storer H. Rowley, a former national editor and foreign correspondent for the Chicago Tribune, teaches journalism and communication at Northwestern University.



Anshel Pfeffer. His political fate is now entwined with the war.

"Chuck Schumer is not the only person who wants (Netanyahu's) government gone or changed. Most Israelis want Netanyahu gone as prime minister as well," said Linda Epstein, a Canadian Israeli political analyst who has lived in the country for 40 years. Israel's parliamentary system makes it a challenge, she added, since Netanyahu's governing coalition has a majority of the 120 seats in the Knesset and most of its original members "are not willing to give up their seats."

Netanyahu knows that "the longer he drags out the war, the longer it takes for a state commission of inquiry to begin" looking into intelligence and military failures leading up to Oct. 7, she said.

"The truth is almost everyone in the country is still suffering from trauma in one way or another," Epstein said, "and because the country is so small, everyone knows someone who lost someone on Oct. 7 or knows someone in the army or knows someone who was killed."

The same is true in Gaza, where whole families have been lost. Biden has called for the protection of Palestinian civilians in the planned Israeli offensive to come in Rafah, the southern Gaza city where some 1.4 million displaced Palestinians have sought refuge.

The war has bitterly divided American Jews and drawn outrage and cries of "genocide Joe" from younger voters and Arab and Muslim Americans. Biden's unwavering support for Israel has hurt him in a presidential election year, with substantial numbers of Democrats voting "uncommitted" in protest in primaries. If that continues, it could cost him a close election.

To be sure, the administration rightly has championed Israel's right to defend itself after Hamas terrorists went on a bloody rampage Oct. 7, killed 1,200 Israelis, raped and tortured victims and took 240 hostages back into Gaza. Hamas has no interest in peace or a two-state solution. It has promised more massacres, but it must accept a cease-fire and release the hostages now.

Netanyahu has also rejected Biden's call for a two-state solution once the war ends. It's the only viable path to peace—even though, after the trauma endured by both sides, that could

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The Saipan Tribune reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Feelings on the flag

Recently, a video circulated on social media showing the Commonwealth flag being burned. For many of us who watched the video, these emotions may have come to mind: shock, anger, disgust. To burn a flag usually is a statement of protest, and many groups and organizations have done it to make various statements.

Watching that video today brought a lot of emotions in me, very strong ones. But rather than address the party at play, I would rather address the act itself. Burning the flag is an act that not only an act of protest, but here in the CNMI, it is illegal. As evident of the many people who shared 1 CMC §223 in response to the video. This act was meant to send a message, but what it did as well was attract feelings of negativity and outrage.

One reason for the act, a denunciation of its display. True, we all have personal feelings of what the ideal banner of the Northern Marianas should be, but as citizens of Northern Marianas descent, the flag we have is one that our elders decided would be the fairest representation of all of us. And it was not a decision made in a whim, it was a decision made with thought and consideration for everyone alive at the time who called Saipan, Tinian and Gāni home.

It was through the creativity of the late Douglas Rankin where its look came about, and it became our official flag through Amendment 43 of the Commonwealth Constitution. And going back to Commonwealth Code, Public Law 6-11 governs the dimensions and depth of its central image among others. Growing up as a kid, I remember asking my father what did the flag sym-

bolize, and he would tell me what each portion of it meant.

That alone, was something that triggered my interest in knowing more of not just who I was, but our history as a whole. That curiosity led me to being a cultural practitioner, and the flag instilled a feeling of respect for the islands I was a citizen of. And that flag is what makes all of us proud of these islands, regardless of what culture we may identify as.

Yes, both our constitution and the U.S. Constitution allow us to express ourselves and our beliefs the way we want to. But, it's one thing to do it through peaceful avenues, and another to do it via illegal means. This statement was done to get under the skin of some, but it riled up the skin of many, because of the love they have for the flag.

Answer this, how many students who have graduated from high school, colleges and universities at home and around the world have turned their tassels with either the flag's image on their caps or on sashes that adorned their necks? How many NMDers from the 670 ask their parents and relatives to send them a CNMI flag, or order one from a flag website just so they can show their neighbours where they're from and who they are on their block? And how many servicemen and women took that flag with them into battle in war zones such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait?

It will take you a lifetime just to even guess. You see, the flag is more than just a square of woven nylon with a latte stone and a flower wreath screen printed onto it, it is a fabric that is woven into every facet of our society, into our collective identity as Northern Mariana islanders. It is something that governors from Carlos Camacho to Arnold Palacios, House speakers from Oscar Rasa to Edmund Villagomez, Senate presidents from Larry to Edith DeLeon Guerrero, and every Commonwealth mayor and council member has faced with attention at their respective inaugurations.

The image of it being held in honor brought me to tears at my swearing-in. It is the symbol our top athletes have watched with pride and emotion raised at the medal podium at the Micro and Pacific Games, it has flapped in the summer breeze in the outfield at Williamsport, and held up in victory in the Octagon of the UFC. It has been processed in with our indigenous artists at FES-TPAC, hung in the halls of the Capitol in Washington, and displayed at the shores of Pearl Harbor. It is the same flag that draped the caskets of governors Tenorio, DeLeon Guerrero, and Inos at their funerals, and the same banner displayed on the mantles and China cabinets of the homes of island sons named: Chen, Lieto, Jack, Emul, Camacho, Charfauros, Fontanilla, just to name a few, next to the stars and stripes given to their families in recognition of their service to country.

And when debris scattered our battered islands after the de-

By LUIS JOHN CASTRO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Luis John Castro is currently Youth Congress secretary/coordinator. He is also a former member of the CNMI House of Representatives.



struction of typhoons such as Soudelor, Mangkhut, and Yutu, it was the very image of our flag flying on relief trucks and CUC vehicles that gave us the inspiration to display resiliency through the despair. It even brought hope to residents on Guam, Palau and the rest of Micronesia when our boys brought the flag with them when they ventured out to restore their villages and states back to normalcy when Mother Nature dealt them a hard blow. A flag was not the only thing burned in that video, the collective spirit of those who love our Commonwealth was scorched as well.

This selfish act affected the spirits of people who lived and died defending it, and the children who pledge allegiance to it. When you look at our history, we are a people who for nearly half a millennium have had to salute flags of countries not our own. We are a people grateful for a faraway nation whose three-colored banner allowed us to chart our collective future, which included determining the flag we as citizens and public servants swear to honor.

If something such as the flag does not jive with your beliefs, OK you don't have to agree, but there are many ways to resolve differences other than desecrating a cultural symbol. Conduct an online poll, call into KKMP and make it a topic of discussion with Gary and Gordon. Hold a town hall meeting with other concerned citizens, ask a legislator to draft bills or initiative to address its look, or file a certified question with the courts to get an answer to your concerns. Why do something like burn the flag? To seek attention? To get likes and shares on Facebook? To incite civil unrest?

We are a tiny community, and acts like this also attack the very ideals of *inafa'måolek* and *tipiyééw*, virtues that govern our very cultures. We live now in times that are uncertain, where we all worry about how to pay bills, feed ourselves and our children, take care of our elders, keep our lights on and water running and buy the medicine we need to stay healthy, etc. This is a time where we should be looking out for each other and not fighting one another.

In closing, I can honestly say that we will never agree on anything and everything, regardless of whether you're Chamorro or Carolinian (Refaluwasch). But whatever disagreements we have politically, culturally, or aesthetically, can always be heard out in a peaceful and rational matter. That...is what made us as strong as we are now, and then. And when it comes to disagreements or offering perspective, one would be better building bridges and not burning flags. And so, I end this expression of opinion the best way I know how, and that is by pledging this:

PRINIMETI

“Manhula yu’ fiet,
gi papa i bandera-hu Nottle Marianas;
na bai hu cho gue todú i nina siña-hu
para bai hu prutehi yan difende i Hinengge, i Kottura,
i Lenguáhi, i Aire, i Hanom yan i Tano; ni irensia-ku direcho
ginen as Yu us Tata
para todú hinirasion Chamorro; pã’go, yan para todo i tiempo.”

AKKAPAL

“Ti akkapal ló faal
Ghaleraal Marianas
Bwe ibwe féeru
Angaang Illol bwángily
Reel ibwe tepengi me
Lugheey,
Yaasch lúghúlúgh,
Kkosch, kkapas, yááng
Schaal me faluw
Bweigha Ikkaal amweliy
Sangi samasch
Lugheiláng
Repaghuluwosch
Ighila me mweteló mwaal.”

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

April come she will phasic basics

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY ‘PEPE BATBON’
CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka “Pepe Batbon” Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. Joey is the Poet Laureate of Tinian, celebrating 40 years in the CNMI.



APRIL LOVE: THE STATURE OF NATURE

“April love is for the very young, every star’s a wishing star that shines for you. April love is all the 7 wonders, one little kiss can tell you this is true.” Pat Boone, pop music hit 1957.

When April showers and ‘April Love’ as sung by Pat Boone in 1957 mix beneath an April moon young lovers swoon and dance the night away to their very own private tune With old love songs on the AM and FM radio they croon Hear Philippine turtle doves and pigeons coo and make love all night and lollygag in bed until late afternoon Slowly parting from each other as April rains come soon May flowers don’t necessarily lead to June bridal bowers From July heat to sweltering sweaty August hear them cry Come September October November they have time to reflect remember and prepare for a delight full December Love surfaces in January but of valentines they are wary.

AN ABECEDARIAN APRIL SENRYU SONNET

ADOLESCENCE fools rush in during teenage years
BIRTHDAY to be or not to be Shakespeare baptized
COMES a yellow dress for Easter from Chaucer showers
DO’S and don’ts thunder lightening and rain threatening
EGGS hardboiled in a basket chocolate has been foiled
FOOLS forget what they are like by May and June
GALA ‘Singing in the Rain’ dancing by ‘A staire’s’
HI JINX fooling around splashing in mud puddles
INJUSTICE pouring rain all day on her 16th birthday
JOKER cracks grins as April songs and tales he spins
KICKED soccer balls hit some ready some foolish heads
LOVE throughout April Love Pat Boone still croons
MOON full fools fall in love fooling under and above
NOON at a high calorie buffet time for a fourth plate.

BIDEN

From Page 8

well take years. A credible road to peace will require new Israeli and Palestinian leaders. As long as Netanyahu and his coalition won't call new elections, Biden needs to work with him.

So, Biden's stuck with Netanyahu. He could have slow-walked military assistance, but he hasn't, said Miller, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He could have demanded a complete cease-fire, but he hasn't, preferring to urge Israel's government to go ahead with a Rafah operation to root out Hamas—but only if they can do it cautiously with the least harm to Palestinian civilians. The U.S. abstention on the U.N. resolution was a rebuke more than a change in U.S. policy.

The lost Palestinian lives have been a generational catastrophe, and surviving civilians in Gaza now face imminent famine. The world must rally to help them. But Biden is right. There can be no lasting peace without subduing Hamas.

GAZA

From Page 8

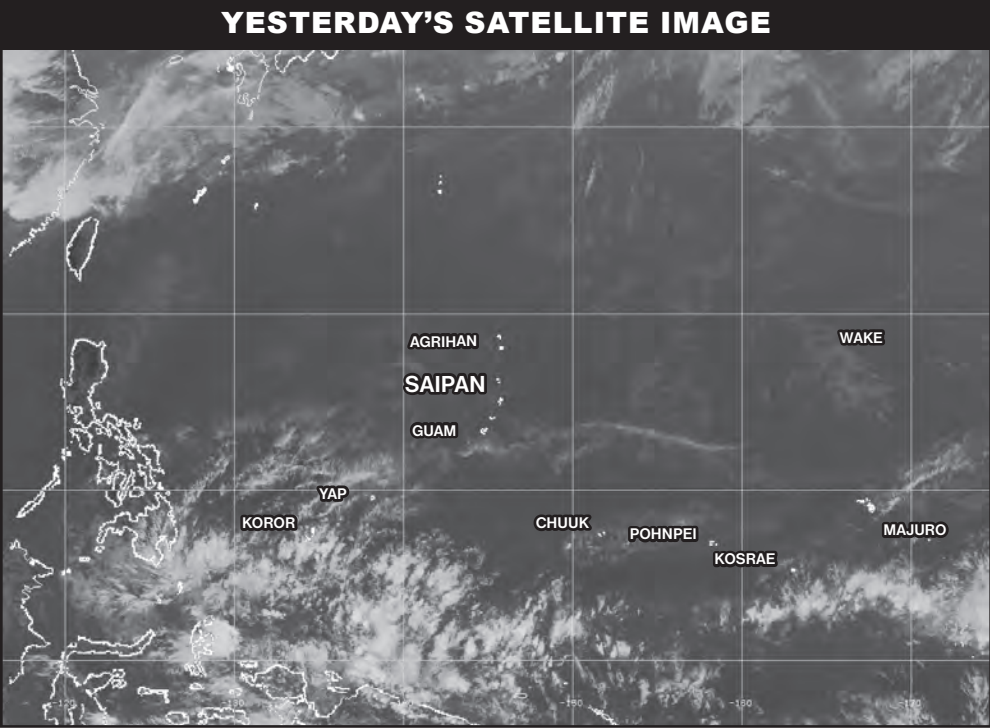
own power.

The deaths of more than 32,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, and the grief and misery of the survivors is not merely tragic, but gratuitous. Whatever clout the U.S. retains in the region should be used to end this madness. It is a fourth party to the conflict. As is the rest of the world.

And then build the dock.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
Mostly sunny with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	
86°	76°	86°	76°	86°	76°	86°	76°	86°	76°



PICTURE TIME: 6:50 AM THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows partly sunny skies and isolated showers moving through the Marianas. Wave models show combined seas of 6 to 8 feet dominated by east-northeast swell of 6 to 7 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA ▲ ▼ °F		
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	88° / 79°
Palau	Cloudy	86° / 81°
Yap	Cloudy	89° / 81°
Chuuk	Showers in the Vicinity	88° / 81°
Pohnpei	Light Rain Shower	89° / 82°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:09 AM	6:29 PM
Saturday	6:08 AM	6:30 PM
Sunday	6:08 AM	6:30 PM
Monday	6:07 AM	6:30 PM
Tuesday	6:06 AM	6:30 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	3:17 AM	3:01 PM	-
Saturday	4:03 AM	4:02 PM	-
Sunday	4:47 AM	5:01 PM	-
Monday	5:30 AM	6:01 PM	-
Tuesday	6:13 AM	7:01 PM	-

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF APRIL 1, 2024

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:10AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:25PM	4:10AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily	UA192	10:25PM	6:15AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam	UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily	7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

AROUND THE GLOBE ▲ ▼ °F		
Auckland	Showers	66° / 57°
Beijing	Fair	67° / 45°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	81° / 77°
Honolulu	Showers	80° / 68°
London	Sunny	68° / 46°
Los Angeles	Showers	62° / 52°
Manila	Mostly Sunny	93° / 79°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	64° / 50°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	83° / 72°
New York	Rain/Wind	44° / 41°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	65° / 58°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	73° / 50°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	64° / 48°
Rome	Sunny	70° / 46°
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	81° / 63°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	56° / 48°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	68° / 52°
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	65° / 53°
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	52° / 47°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET		
5:43 AM	High Tide	1.86
11:16 AM	Low Tide	1.13
4:12 PM	High Tide	1.75
11:18 PM	Low Tide	-0.07

Business

AS REGION CHOKES ON SMOG

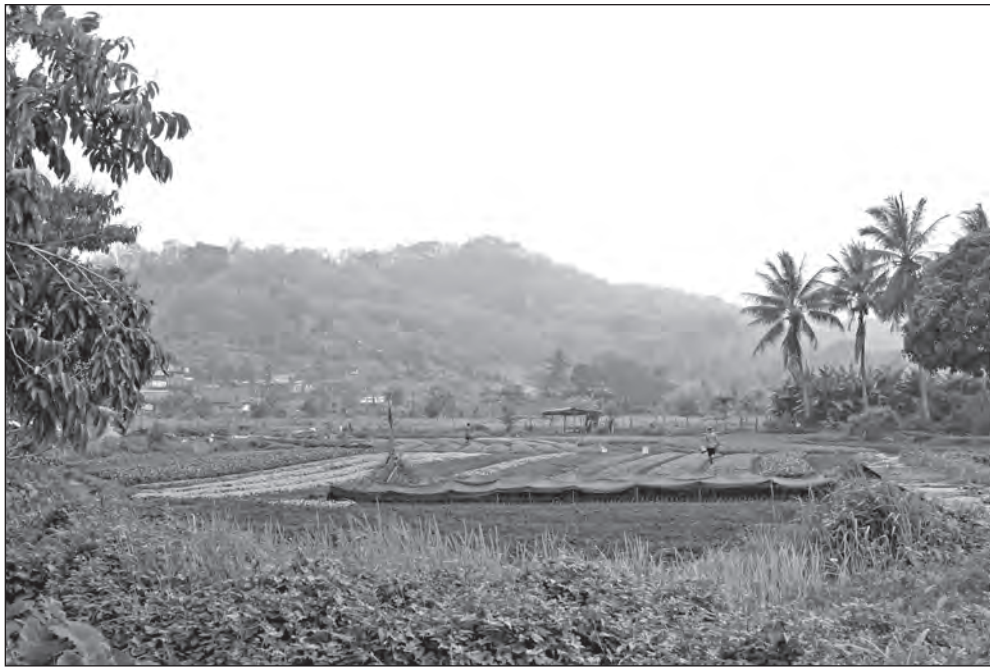
Southeast Asian countries consider ways to boost 'green financing'

LUANG PRABANG, Laos (AP)—Senior finance and central bank officials from Southeast Asia and major economies met Thursday in the scenic Laotian city of Luang Prabang to discuss ways to help the region build resilience against shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters brought on by climate change.

The need for faster progress was dramatically apparent as the city and surrounding region were engulfed in heavy smoke from fires—some set to clear forests for crops, some ignited by record high temperatures and tinder-dry conditions. The air quality index early Thursday was nearly 300, or “very unhealthy.”

Laos and other countries in Southeast Asia have committed to seeking more sustainable ways to feed their people and power their economies. The question is where the money will come from to do that.

Green finance is among several items on the agenda of the finance meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations related to countering the mounting impacts of global warming. The officials also were set for talks on an



Farmers tend their fields in stifling temperatures as surrounding hills are choked by smoke from field and hill fires across the region, Thursday, April 4, 2024, in Luang Prabang, Laos.

ASEAN infrastructure fund and disaster risk financing and insurance, according to the agenda provided by hosts of this week's meetings.

Also on the list, refining a “taxonomy” to help identify and agree on projects that support ASEAN's sustainability agenda and align with its climate change commitments and other goals.

The 10 member nations of ASEAN—Brunei, Cambodia,

Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam—range from tiny but wealthy Brunei and Singapore to big, fast growing economies like Vietnam and Indonesia. They have pledged to cut carbon emissions to help reduce the impact of climate change but are struggling to find ways to unlock financing needed to make that transition.

ASEAN members are ex-

tremely vulnerable to extreme weather, drought and rising sea levels. Investments in clean energy need to increase by five to seven times, to more than \$200 billion a year, according to various estimates. Laos and its neighbors also are contending with a raft of other regional troubles, in-

cluding human trafficking, a growing illicit drug trade and fast-growing enclaves of on-line scam centers run by criminal syndicates.

A landlocked country of about 7.5 million people, Laos is rich in hydroelectric power, but its economy has been shrinking in recent years and its national finances are fraught—strained by a heavy load of foreign and domestic debt, a weakening currency and inflation.

Longstanding traditions and a lack of funding to persuade farmers not to rely on crop burning—their most affordable option—mean that progress is slow. The government has set a goal of reducing the number of fires by 35% by the end of 2025. Similar burning in neighboring Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia leaves the region shrouded in heavy smog for weeks at a time during the spring.

Countries in the region have begun to build regional electricity grids as one step toward improving a balance between supply and demand.

A higher priority for Laos, a Communist state where annual incomes average below \$2,000 a person, is weaving itself into the wider regional economy of about 660 million people. Combined, the region is the world's fifth-largest economy at about \$3.3 trillion.

Like many countries in the region, Laos' economy has become increasingly entwined with that of China. Those ties have deepened with the building of a \$6 billion high-speed railway that links to railways in southwest China's Yunnan province and eventually will be connected with a line running to Bangkok and the Gulf of Thailand. The downside: debts that are a heavy drain on the country's resources.

Along with regional financial leaders, senior officials of major international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and Asian Development Bank, along with delegates from Japan, China, the U.S. and other major economies, are attending the talks in Luang Prabang.

Treasury secretary heads to China to talk trade, anti-money laundering and Chinese 'overproduction'

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska (AP)—Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is headed to a China determined to avoid open conflict with the United States, yet the world's two largest economies still appear to be hashing out the rules on how to compete against each other.

There are tensions over Chinese government support for the manufacturing of electric vehicles and solar panels, just as the U.S. government ramps up its own aid for those tech sectors. There are differences in trade, ownership of TikTok, access to computer chips and national security—all of them a risk to what has become a carefully managed relationship.

The 77-year-old Yellen, a renowned economist and former Federal Reserve chair, laid out to reporters the issues that she intends to raise with her Chinese counterparts during her five-day visit. Yellen is headed to Guangzhou and Beijing for meetings with finance

leaders and state officials. Her engagements will include Vice Premier He Lifeng, Chinese Central Bank Governor Pan Gongsheng, former Vice Premier Liu He, leaders of American businesses operating in China, university students and local leaders.

Yellen, speaking to reporters Wednesday during a refueling stop in Alaska en route to Asia, said her visit would be a “continuation of the dialogue that we have been engaged and deepening” ever since U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in 2022 in Indonesia. She noted that it would be her third meeting with China's vice premier.

Yellen recently accused China of flooding global markets with heavily subsidized green energy products, possibly undercutting the subsidies the U.S. has provided to its own renewable energy and EV sector with funds provided by the Democrats' Inflation Reduction Act. She said she intends to repeat her concerns to

Chinese officials that they're flooding the global market with cheap solar panels and EVs that thwart the ability of other countries to develop those sectors.

“We need to have a level playing field,” Yellen told reporters. “We're concerned about a massive investment in China in a set of industries that's resulting in overcapacity.”

Yellen didn't rule out taking additional steps to counter Chinese subsidies in the green energy sectors, adding, “It's not just the United States but quite a few countries, including Mexico, Europe, Japan, that are feeling the pressure from massive investment, in these industries in China.”

The Treasury secretary's travels come after Biden and Xi held their first call in five months on Tuesday, meant to demonstrate a return to regular leader-to-leader dialogue between the two powers. The leaders discussed Taiwan, artificial intelligence and security issues.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Maritime terminal prepares for influx of redirected ships as Baltimore bridge cleanup continues

BALTIMORE (AP)—The only maritime shipping terminal currently operating in the Port of Baltimore is preparing to process an influx of ships as crews continue clearing the mangled wreckage of the collapsed Francis Scott Key Bridge. Tradeport Atlantic will unload and process an estimated 10,000 vehicles over the next 15 days, according to a company statement. That includes six regularly scheduled ships and nine others redirected as access to the port's main terminals remains blocked, posing a logistical nightmare for shipping along the East Coast. Crews opened a second temporary channel through the collapse site Tuesday, but it's too shallow for most commercial vessels. The two alternate channels are meant primarily to aid in the cleanup effort. Work continues to open a third channel that will allow larger vessels to pass through the bottleneck and restore more commercial activity, officials said. Meanwhile, bad weather has hin-

dered salvage operations in recent days. The Patapsco River is also very murky, severely limiting the visibility of divers. The bridge fell March 26 after being struck by the cargo ship Dali, which lost power shortly after leaving Baltimore, bound for Sri Lanka. The ship issued a mayday alert with just enough time for police to stop traffic, but not enough to save a roadwork crew filling potholes on the bridge. Authorities believe six of the workers plunged to their deaths in the collapse, including two whose bodies were recovered last week. Two others survived.

Powell: Fed still sees rate cuts this year; election timing won't affect decision

WASHINGTON (AP)—Federal Reserve officials will likely reduce their benchmark interest rate later this year, Chair Jerome Powell said Wednesday, despite recent reports showing that the U.S. economy is still strong and that U.S. inflation picked up in January and February. “The recent data do not ... materially change the overall picture,” Powell said in a

speech at Stanford University, “which continues to be one of solid growth, a strong but rebalancing labor market, and inflation moving down toward 2% on a sometimes bumpy path.” Most Fed officials “see it as likely to be appropriate” to start cutting their key rate “at some point this year,” he added. In his speech, Powell also sought to dispel any notion that the Fed's interest-rate decisions might be affected by this year's presidential election campaign. The Fed will meet and decide whether to cut rates during the peak of the campaign, in July and September. Fed officials will face a delicate decision during those months and during their upcoming meetings in May and June. The policymakers must take care not to cut rates too soon or inflation could stay high—or even re-accelerate. Annual inflation ticked up in February to 2.5%, according to the central bank's preferred measure, though that was down sharply from its peak of 7.1%. Yet if Fed officials wait too long to reduce rates, the current high borrowing costs for mortgages, car loans and business loans could seriously weaken the economy—even tip it into a recession.

Nation

Biden faces protest over his support for Israel

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden has faced protests over the conflict in Gaza all over the country, but this week he confronted one inside the White House itself.

The occasion was a private meeting on Tuesday where Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and national security leaders could hear from Muslim Americans about their concerns involving the war between Israel and Hamas.

Shortly after the conversation began, a Palestinian American doctor from Chicago named Thaer Ahmad who has volunteered in Gaza announced that he was walking out.

Before leaving, Ahmad presented the president with a letter from an orphaned 8-year-old girl in Rafah, a city that Israel plans to target next. He included a photo.

Ahmad said Biden's response to his protest was muted.

"He said, 'I understand,'" the doctor recalled.

Biden's support for Israel's military operations in Gaza, including the sale of U.S. weapons, has angered Muslim Americans. The war began on Oct. 7 when Hamas killed 1,200 Israelis in a surprise attack.

Since then, roughly 33,000



Demonstrators rally in support of Palestinians, Tuesday, April 2, 2024, at Lafayette Park across from the White House in Washington.

Palestinians have been killed by Israel. Biden has expressed concern about civilian casualties but has not cut off military assistance for Israel.

"There's a change in the rhetoric," Ahmad said. "But concrete actions, we have not seen a significant change."

This week's meeting was arranged by the White House

instead of the more traditional celebratory dinner to mark the end of Ramadan. Several Muslim community leaders had refused invitations to break their fasts with the president, saying it would have been inappropriate at a time of famine in Gaza.

"We understand how this community is feeling in a

deeply painful moment," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Wednesday.

She was circumspect

when asked about Tuesday's meeting, saying the conversation was private. Pressed on Biden's reaction to Ahmad's decision to walk

out, she said the president "respects their freedom to peacefully protest."

When Ahmad received the invitation to attend the White House meeting, he was under the impression that the meeting would be Biden's first opportunity to talk with someone who had been on the ground in Gaza in the six months after the war started.

Jean-Pierre would not confirm whether that was the case.

As the meeting approached, Ahmad said he was troubled by a string of news stories about U.S. weapons sales to Israel.

"I was starting to question, what's the purpose of the meeting? What difference am I going to make by being there?" he said.

Before going to the White House, Ahmad decided that he would walk out once the meeting started.

"I'm not going to yell at anybody. I'm not going to throw anything. I'm just going to walk out calmly," Ahmad said. "And that's what I did."

Ahmad is planning another trip to Gaza at the end of the month.

Judge rejects Trump request to delay hush-money trial until Supreme Court rules on his immunity

NEW YORK (AP)—A judge on Wednesday rejected Donald Trump's bid to delay his April 15 hush money criminal trial until the Supreme Court rules on presidential immunity claims he raised in another of his criminal cases—spurning another of the former president's ploys to put off the historic trial. Several more are pending.

Manhattan Judge Juan M. Merchan declared the request untimely, ruling that Trump's lawyers had "myriad opportunities" to raise the immunity issue before they finally did so last month, well after a deadline for pretrial motions had already passed.

The timing of the defense's March 7 filing "raises real questions about the sincerity and actual purpose of the motion," Merchan wrote in a six-page decision.

Lawyers for Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee, had asked Merchan to adjourn the New York trial indefinitely until Trump's immunity claim in his Washington, D.C., election interference case is resolved.

Trump contends he is im-

mune from prosecution for conduct alleged to involve official acts during his tenure in office. His lawyers have not raised that as a defense in the hush-money case, but they argued that some evidence—including Trump's social media posts about former lawyer Michael Cohen—is from his time as president and should be excluded from the trial because of his immunity protections.

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear arguments on April 25—a week-and-a-half after the start of jury selection in the hush-money case.

Trump lawyer Todd Blanche declined to comment. The Manhattan district attorney's office also declined to comment.

Trump first raised the immunity issue in his Washington criminal case, which involves allegations that he worked to overturn the results of his 2020 election loss in the run-up to the violent riot by his supporters at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Merchan, in his ruling, drew a distinction between the Washington case—which he referred to as the Federal Insurrection Matter—and the hush-

money case he's overseeing.

In Washington, Trump is trying to use presidential immunity to get the charges thrown out on the grounds that he has "absolute immunity from federal criminal liability," the judge wrote. In the hush-money case, he said, Trump is trying to preclude evidence of what prosecutors said was his "pressure campaign" against Cohen and other witnesses.

The hush money case centers on allegations that Trump falsified his company's internal records to hide the true nature of payments to his former lawyer Michael Cohen, who helped Trump bury negative stories during his 2016 presidential campaign. Among other things, Cohen paid porn actor Stormy Daniels \$130,000 to suppress her claims of an extramarital sexual encounter with Trump years earlier.

Trump pleaded not guilty last year to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records. He has denied having a sexual encounter with Daniels, and his lawyers argue the payments to Cohen were legitimate legal expenses and not part of any cover-up.

California schools forced to compete with fast food industry for workers after hike in minimum wage

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Lost in the hubbub surrounding California's new \$20-per-hour minimum wage for fast food workers is how that raise could impact public schools, forcing districts to compete with the likes of McDonald's and Wendy's for cafeteria workers amid a state budget crunch.

The minimum wage law that took effect Monday guarantees at least \$20-per-hour for workers at fast food restaurant chains with at least 60 locations nationwide. That doesn't include school food service workers, historically some of the lowest-paid workers in public education.

Yet demand for school meals is higher than ever in California, the first state to guarantee free meals for all students regardless of their family's income. And demand is projected to fuel an increase of more than 70 million extra meals in California schools this year compared to 2018, according to the state Department of Education.

But these jobs typically have lots of turnover and are harder to fill. The minimum wage boost for fast food workers could make that even more difficult.

"They are all very worried

about it. Most are saying they anticipate it will be harder and harder to hire employees," said Carrie Bogdanovich, president of the California School Nutrition Association.

Statewide, some districts have already taken steps to compete in the new reality. Last year, the Sacramento Unified School District—anticipating the law's passage—agreed to a 10% increase for its food service workers and other low-paying jobs, followed by another 6% increase July 1 of this year to bump their wages up to \$20 per hour.

Cancy McAm, the district's chief human resources officer, said it was the largest single raise in the district in nearly three decades.

"We are looking not only at competing with districts and comparing with districts, we're also looking at fast food places," McAm said.

In Southern California, San Luis Coastal Unified doubled its food service staff to 40 people after seeing a 52% increase in the number of students eating school meals. The district prepares 8,500 meals daily for 7,600 students across 15 school sites—breakfast, lunch and even supper options for youth in after-school sports and activities.

The district has since lim-

ited the number of its entry-level positions, which are the hardest to fill, while seeking to hire more for complex roles like "culinary lead" and "central kitchen supervisor" that require more skills and hours—making them more attractive to job seekers.

"That's allowed us to be more competitive," said Erin Primer, director of food and nutrition services for the San Luis Coastal Unified School District.

Tia Orr, executive director of the Services Employees International Union California—which represents both school food service workers and fast food employees—said school districts and other service industries must consider raising wages because of this new law.

"This is a good thing, and it is long overdue," she said.

But some districts are limited in what they can do. In the Lynwood Unified School District in Los Angeles County, the starting salary for food service workers is \$17.70 per hour and maxes out at \$21.51 per hour, according to Gretchen Janson, the district's assistant superintendent of business services. She said these workers only work three hours per day, meaning they aren't eligible for health benefits.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Rescuers search for people out of contact in Taiwan after strong earthquake

HUALIEN, Taiwan (AP)—Rescuers searched Thursday for dozens of people still out of contact a day after Taiwan's strongest earthquake in a quarter century damaged buildings, caused multiple rockslides and killed nine people. In the eastern coastal city of Hualien near the epicenter, workers used an excavator to stabilize the base of a damaged building with construction materials, as some officers took samples of its exterior. Mayor Hsu Chen-wei previously said 48 residential buildings had been damaged, some of which were tilting at precarious angles with their ground floors crushed. Some Hualien residents were still staying in tents, but much of the island's day-to-day life was returning to normal. Some local rail service to Hualien resumed, and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. restarted most operations, the Central News Agency reported. Hendri Sutrisno, a 30-year-old professor at Hualien Dong Hwa University, spent Wednesday night in a tent with his family, fearing aftershocks. "We ran out of the apartment and waited for four to five hours before we went up again to grab some important stuff such as our wallet. And then we're staying here ever since to assess the situation," he said. Others also said they didn't dare to go home because the walls of their apartments were cracked and they lived on higher floors. More than 1,050 people were injured in the quake that struck Wednesday morning. Of the nine dead, at least four were killed inside Taroko National Park, a tourist attraction famous for its scenes of canyons and cliffs in Hualien County, about 150 kilometers (90 miles) from the island's capital Taipei. One was found dead in a damaged building.

Palestinians want April vote on UN membership despite US saying peace with Israel must come first

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The Palestinians want the Security Council to vote later this month on their revived request for full membership in the United Nations, despite the United States reiterating Wednesday that Israel and the Palestinians must first negotiate a peace agreement. Riyadh Mansour, the Palestinian U.N. ambassador, said 140 countries

recognize the state of Palestine, and "we believe it is high time now for our state to become a full member at the United Nations." The Palestinians are making a fresh bid for U.N. membership as the war between Israel and Hamas that began Oct. 7 nears its sixth month, putting the unresolved decades-old Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the spotlight after years on the back burner. During the Cold War between the former Soviet Union and the United States, Mansour said, countries were blocked from joining the U.N., but they all eventually became members, including North Korea. The U.S. doesn't recognize North Korea but didn't block its admission, he said, and asked why conditions should be placed on Palestinian membership. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas delivered the Palestinian Authority's application to become the 194th member of the United Nations to then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Sept. 23, 2011, before addressing world leaders at the General Assembly. That bid failed because the Palestinians failed to get the required support of nine of the Security Council's 15 members. Even if they did, the United States, Israel's closest ally, had promised at that time to veto any council resolution endorsing Palestinian membership, saying this should follow a negotiated peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

In rare call, Russian defense minister warns French counterpart against sending troops to Ukraine

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia's defense minister warned his French counterpart against deploying troops to Ukraine in a rare phone call Wednesday and noted that Moscow is ready to take part in talks to end the conflict. Sergei Shoigu told French Defense Minister Sébastien Lecornu that if Paris follows up on its statements about the possibility of sending a French military contingent to Ukraine, "it will create problems for France itself," according to a statement from the Russian Defense Ministry. It didn't elaborate. The conversation followed French President Emmanuel Macron's comments in February, in which he said that the possibility of Western troops being sent to Ukraine could not be ruled out. The call marked the first such contact between Russian and French defense ministers since October 2022. Shoigu noted Moscow's "readiness for dialogue on Ukraine," emphasizing that

a planned round of peace talks in Geneva would be "senseless" without Russia's involvement. He added that possible future negotiations could be based on a draft document, which was discussed during Russia-Ukraine talks in Istanbul in March 2022. Media reports have said that the draft negotiated in Istanbul weeks after Moscow sent troops into Ukraine envisaged that Ukraine will abandon its bid to join NATO and remain neutral. No final deal was reached and the talks collapsed quickly after.

In the aftermath of the Moscow concert hall attack, is a harsher era under Putin in the works?

The aftermath of the Moscow concert hall attack that killed 145 people in the bloodiest assault in Russia in two decades seems to be setting the stage for even harsher rule by President Vladimir Putin following his highly orchestrated electoral landslide last month. Putin vowed to hunt down the

masterminds of the March 22 attack that he linked to Ukraine despite Kyiv's vehement denials and a claim of responsibility by an offshoot of the Islamic State group. He warned ominously that terrorism is a "double-edged weapon." Putin lieutenant Dmitry Medvedev declared that if Ukrainian involvement is proven, Moscow should respond by deploying hit men to kill the country's leaders "in Kyiv or any other convenient place." The

attack dealt a heavy blow to Putin less than a week after the vote that extended his rule for another six-years. It marked a major failure by his security agencies that were given an advance warning by the U.S. that extremists were planning an imminent attack. Critics of the Kremlin argue that security forces are so focused on conducting the harshest crackdown on dissent since Soviet times that they are distracted from tackling real threats. (AP)

A Beautiful Soul, Forever Loved, Never Forgotten

Margaret Quitano Sablan McQuay

Lovingly known as "Marge or Adig"
January 26, 1950 - March 23, 2024

Margaret, passed away peacefully at the age of 74, surrounded by her daughter, granddaughters, and siblings. She was born in Saipan to †Elena Roberto Quitano and †Pedro Dela Torre Sablan. Margaret was a devoted mother and grandmother who always put her family first. She was firm and feisty but was also kindhearted, thoughtful, generous and caring who gave not only of her time but also any other assistance she could provide. Margaret was known to be a great cook and loved baking, and enjoyed preparing dishes for family occasions. Margaret left Saipan after high school and became a flight attendant, married and had her children. She lived an active life in Colorado, California and Hawaii. She was a long time staff for the Marianas-Hawaii Liaison Office in Hawaii from mid 1990 to mid 2000. She moved back to Saipan to be with her mom and siblings. Margaret felt content being back home and embraced the love of dear family and friends.

Margaret's love and memories will forever live in the hearts of her children and family: **Hayden Jonathan; Jennifer Elaine (Hope Gianna, Maya Elaine); and Michael James Jr. & Makenzie (Louie James)**

Daughter at Heart: **Agnes Gloria DLG. & Francisco S. Ada & Family**

Sister-In-Law: **Magdalena Barcinas Sablan & Family**

Reared Brothers, Sisters, and In-Laws:

Elizabeth C. Sablan & Family; Vicente Q. & Erika Camacho & Family; George Q. Camacho & Lydia Sablan & Family; Juan Q. & Luisa C. Camacho & Family; Ellen Q. Camacho; Manuel Q. Camacho & Family; and Emerita Q. Camacho

Father of children: **Michael James McQuay, Sr.**

She will also be missed by numerous aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, Godchildren, and friends.

In her new eternal life, Margaret now joins her parents, †Pedro Dela Torre and †Elena Roberto Quitano Sablan; her brother, †Dr. Manuel Quitano Sablan, her reared parents: †Vidal Acosta Camacho and †Justa Quitano Camacho; her reared sister, †Rita Quitano Camacho; and, her reared brother in law, †Ernest Mangarero Sablan.

Mass for the repose soul of Margaret is offered daily at 6:00 a.m. at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral and at 6:00 p.m. at San Jose Church.

Funeral services and last respects for our beloved Margaret will be held on Monday, April 8, 2024 at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral beginning at 8:00 a.m. The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m., followed by the Rite of Committal at the Mount Carmel Cemetery where she will be laid at peaceful rest with her beloved parents.

For all your love, prayers, thoughts and kindness, Thank You and Si Yu'us Ma'ase

The children and families of
†Margaret Quitano Sablan McQuay

Off The Wall

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Children race to collect marshmallows dropped from a helicopter at a Detroit-area park

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. (AP)—It rained marshmallows at a suburban Detroit park on Friday as children raced to snatch up thousands of the gooey treats being dropped from a helicopter. The annual Great Marshmallow Drop took place at Catalpa Oaks County Park in Southfield, hosted by Oakland County Parks. Hundreds of children waved and cheered as the helicopter passed by on its way to the drop zone. Once there, a passenger dumped the treats out of a sack and onto the grass below and children darted to collect them. Officials stressed that although the fluffy treats are tempting, they must not be eaten because they hit the ground. Instead, kids exchanged the marshmallows they collected for a prize bag containing candy, a coloring book and a one-day pass to a water park. Speaking before the event, Melissa Nawrocki, Oakland County recreation program supervisor, said 15,000 marshmallows would be dropped. "It was just a celebration. The weather is beautiful, so we were happy to get outdoors and interact and pick up some marshmallows," said Robin Kinnie, the mother of three Great Marshmallow Drop participants, one of whom took part in a special drop reserved for children with disabilities. The helicopter made four passes, dropping marshmallows aimed at kids in three age categories: 4-year-olds and younger; 5 to 7 year olds, and those 8 to 12 years old. The drop for children with disabilities came later in the day. "Being a special needs mom, I love seeing events like these that are catered toward him, so he doesn't feel excluded," Kinnie said.

Shoplifter chased by police on horses in New Mexico, video shows

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)—Police in New Mexico had all the horsepower in this chase: A shoplifter was detained outside a Walgreens this month after trying to outrun a horse-mounted police officer. Albuquerque police bodycam video shows a dark-brown horse trotting through a parking lot behind a man in black clothing. The horse catches up to him within seconds. "It wasn't me," the man yells as he leads the horse and police officer into the street,

stopping traffic. The man then finds himself surrounded when two more police officers on horses arrive at the scene, the video shows. One of the officers dismounts from his horse and handcuffs the man, who has been charged with stealing \$230 worth of merchandise from the Walgreens, according to the Albuquerque Police Department.

Invaders from underground are coming in cicada-geddon. It's the biggest bug emergence in centuries

Trillions of evolution's bizarre wonders, red-eyed periodical cicadas that have pumps in their heads and jet-like muscles in their rears, are about to emerge in numbers not seen in decades and possibly centuries. Crawling out from underground every 13 or 17 years, with a collective song as loud as jet engines, the periodical cicadas are nature's kings of the calendar. These black bugs with bulging eyes differ from their greener-tinged cousins that come out annually. They stay buried year after year, until they surface and take over a landscape, covering houses with shed exoskeletons and making the ground crunchy. This spring, an unusual cicada double dose is about to invade a couple parts of the United States in what University of Connecticut cicada expert John Cooley called "cicada-geddon." The last time these two broods came out together in 1803 Thomas Jefferson, who wrote about cicadas in his Garden Book but mistakenly called them locusts, was president. "Periodic cicadas don't do subtle," Cooley said. If you're fascinated by the upcoming solar eclipse, the cicadas are weirder and bigger, said Georgia Tech biophysicist Saad Bhamla. (AP)

Thailand has a plan to contain the monkey mayhem in the popular tourist town of Lopburi

BANGKOK (AP)—Thai wildlife officials laid out a plan on Wednesday to bring peace to a central Thai city after at least a decade of human-monkey conflict. The macaques that roam Lopburi are a symbol of local culture, and a major tourist draw. But after years of dangerous encounters with residents and visitors and several failed attempts to bring peace with population controls, local people and businesses have had enough. The monkeys frequently try to snatch food from humans, sometimes resulting in tus-

sles that can leave people with scratches and other injuries. But outrage grew in March when a woman dislocated her knee after a monkey pulled her off her feet in an effort to grab food, and another man was knocked off a motorcycle by a hungry monkey. Authorities hope to round up some 2,500 urban monkeys and place them in massive enclosures, said Athapol Charoenshunsa, the director-general of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation. They'll work with wildlife experts to find a way for a limited number of monkeys to stay at liberty in the city, he added. "I don't want humans to have to hurt monkeys, and I don't want monkeys to have to hurt humans," he told reporters during a news conference in Bangkok. An official monkey catching campaign was launched week, prioritizing more aggressive alpha males. It has caught 37 monkeys so far, most of whom have been placed put under the care of wildlife authorities in the neighboring province of Saraburi, while others were sent to the Lopburi zoo.

50 years later, a Braves fan shares long-private video of Hank Aaron's 715th home run

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP)—Charlie Russo had an unbelievable view of Hank Aaron's record-breaking 715th home run. Fifty years later, he's ready to share it with the world. The 81-year-old Russo is releasing his long-private footage of the moment Aaron broke Babe Ruth's record on April 8, 1974, which he captured after surreptitiously following Aaron's family onto the field at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium. He was right there celebrating at home plate with Aaron, his family and teammates—including Dusty Baker, who was on deck for the Atlanta Braves when Aaron connected. "Was that guy filming?" Baker asked when told about the video made available to The Associated Press by Russo and his family. "Come on! I've never seen that!" Russo's video shows Aaron—standing just feet away—raising his right arm and smiling to the cheering crowd. "Everything just fell into place," Russo said. "I mean, just everything we did was just, you know, magical." Russo says he and his uncle, Joseph Mathews, obtained the coveted tickets before making the drive from Savannah. The game was a sellout, with a crowd of 53,775. Russo recalls that finding the tickets was just the start of a charmed day.

Science & Technology

Not in the path of totality? You can still watch Monday's total solar eclipse online

If you're nowhere near the path of totality or if clouds spoil your view, you can still catch the total solar eclipse online.

Weather permitting, tens of millions who live along a narrow stretch from Mexico's Pacific coast to eastern Canada can just look skyward Monday to glimpse day turn to twilight when the moon blots out the sun.

Eclipse glasses are a must to prevent eye damage. The only time it's safe to ditch protective glasses is during totality, or the few minutes of complete darkness.

Here are some alternatives if you're clouded out during the eclipse or if you can't travel to the path:

NASA goes live from different eclipse cities

NASA is offering several hours of streaming online and on NASA TV starting at 1 p.m. EDT from several cities along the totality path. The space agency will show telescope views of the sun and there will be appearances by scientists and space station astronauts.



This combination of photos shows the path of the sun during a total eclipse by the moon Monday, Aug. 21, 2017, near Redmond, Ore.

During the eclipse, small rockets will blast off from Wallops Island, Virginia, with science instruments into the electrically charged portion of the atmosphere near the edge of space known as the ionosphere.

AP hosts live show from totality path

Associated Press journalists will fan out along the path of totality to bring live coverage of watch parties and festivities. The AP livestream will start at 10 a.m. EDT with views from Mazatlán, Mexico, and other locations. Commentary will run from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. EDT featuring interviews with organiz-

ers, scientists and live views from along the path.

Telescopes and experiments focus on the sun

The Exploratorium museum will feature live telescope images of the sun from Junction, Texas, and Torreón, Mexico. Researchers and students from the University of Maine will launch high-altitude balloons in an experiment that will be livestreamed from the stratosphere. Time and Date will show the sun from different telescope feeds. Slooh will broadcast from Texas and will have a network of partner telescopes along the path. (AP)

NASA wants to come up with a new clock for the moon, where seconds tick away faster

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP)—NASA wants to come up with an out-of-this-world way to keep track of time, putting the moon on its own souped-up clock.

It's not quite a time zone like those on Earth, but an entire frame of time reference for the moon. Because there's less gravity on the moon, time there moves a tad quicker—58.7 microseconds every day—compared to Earth. So the White House Tuesday instructed NASA and other U.S. agencies to work with international agencies to come up with a new moon-centric time reference system.

"An atomic clock on the moon will tick at a different rate than a clock on Earth," said Kevin Coggins, NASA's top communications and navigation official. "It makes sense that when you go to another body, like the moon or Mars that each one gets its own heartbeat."

So everything on the moon will operate on the speeded-up moon time, Cog-



The moon rises behind the Home Place clock tower in Prattville, Ala., Saturday, June 22, 2013.

gins said.

The last time NASA sent astronauts to the moon they wore watches, but timing wasn't as precise and critical as it now with GPS, satellites and intricate computer and communications systems, he said. Those microseconds matter when high tech systems interact, he said.

Last year, the European Space Agency said Earth needs to come up with a unified time for the moon, where a day lasts 29.5 Earth days.

The International Space Station, being in low Earth orbit, will continue to use co-

ordinated universal time or UTC. But just where the new space time kicks in is something that NASA has to figure out. Even Earth's time speeds up and slows down, requiring leap seconds.

Unlike on Earth, the moon will not have daylight saving time, Coggins said.

The White House wants NASA to come up with a preliminary idea by the end of the year and have a final plan by the end of 2026.

NASA is aiming to send astronauts around the moon in September 2025 and land people there a year later.

Life & Style

Kiss sells catalog, brand name and IP. Gene Simmons assures fans it is a ‘collaboration’

By MARIA SHERMAN
AP Music Writer

It’s never really the end of the road for Kiss. The hard rock quartet have sold their catalog, brand name and IP to Swedish company Pophouse Entertainment Group in a deal estimated to be over \$300 million, it was announced Thursday.

This isn’t the first time Kiss has partnered with Pophouse, which was co-founded by AB-BA’s Björn Ulvaeus. When the band’s current lineup—founders Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons as well as guitarist Tommy Thayer and drummer

Eric Singer—took the stage at the final night of their farewell tour in December at New York City’s famed Madison Square Garden, they ended by revealing digitized avatars of themselves.

The cutting-edge technology was created by George Lucas’ special-effects company, Industrial Light & Magic, in partnership with Pophouse. The two companies recently teamed up for the “ABBA Voyage” show in London, in which fans could attend a full concert by the Swedish band in their heyday, as performed



Gene Simmons, from left, Tommy Thayer, and Paul Stanley of KISS perform during the final night of the “Kiss Farewell Tour” at Madison Square Garden in New York on Dec. 2, 2023.

by their own digital avatars.

The ways in which Kiss’ avatars will be utilized has yet to be announced, but Pophouse CEO Per Sundin says fans can expect a biopic, a documentary and a Kiss experience on the horizon.

An avatar show is scheduled to launch in the second half of 2027—but don’t expect it to look anything like “ABBA Voyage,” Sundin told the AP. And fans can expect it to kick off in North America.

Sundin says the goal of the purchase is to expose Kiss to new generations—which he

believes sets Pophouse apart from other acquisitions of music catalogs.

“The record companies, the three big ones that are left, they’re doing a fantastic job, but they have so many catalogs and they can’t focus on everything,” he says. “We work together with Universal (Music Group) and Kiss, even though we will own the artists rights, and we’re doing it in conjunction with Kiss. But yes, we bought all rights, and that’s not something I’ve seen that clear before.”

Solar eclipse playlist: Songs to rock out to on your cosmic adventure

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The total solar eclipse is quickly approaching. While you prepare to hit the road towards the path of total darkness or anticipate hours of traffic coming out of your watch party, you’ll need something to listen to. And we’ve got your back.

Across nine tracks, here’s a comprehensive playlist of total solar eclipse (and total solar eclipse-adjacent) songs to listen to while preparing to take in the wonders of the universe on Monday. Listen to the full playlist on Spotify.

A classic eclipse song: “Total Eclipse of the Heart” by Bonnie Tyler

There is no more appropriate song than Bonnie Tyler’s karaoke classic, “Total Eclipse of the Heart.” Try not to start a singalong with this one.

A rockin’ eclipse song: “Blinded by the Light”

by Bruce Springsteen

Not the synth-y cover by Manfred Mann’s Earth Band—Bruce Springsteen’s spirited “Blinded by the Light” is an eclipse song for the ages, or at least for those hoping to put a little boogie in their viewing experience.

An eclipse song to dance to: “Blinding Lights” by The Weeknd

One of the greatest pop songs of the last decade, The Weeknd’s “Blinding Lights” is not only an ideal song for speeding down a highway in the darkness—safely, of course—but also a Max Martin-produced earworm that will crawl into your brain and lodge itself there forevermore.

A grounded eclipse song, to remind you of the Earth: “Solar Eclipse” by YoungBoy Never Broke Again

The best YoungBoy Never Broke Again tracks bring the listener into his world: He names

loved ones, he dives deep into his pain and he transforms it into affecting raps. “Solar Eclipse” centers his own mortality and what would happen to his kids if something were to happen to him. A total solar eclipse can be a time for existential thinking: This is a once-in-a-lifetime moment for many, and so it is important to value that lifetime.

An eclipse song for the introspective listener: “Moon at the Window” by Joni Mitchell

In Joni Mitchell’s “Moon at the Window,” a lover looks out towards the sky and sees “ghosts of the future / phantoms of the past,” the folk legend sings atop jazzy instrumentation. There’s a kind of melancholic whimsy here, and lyrical poetry, which makes this song an appropriate listen for a solar eclipse.

A throwback eclipse

song: “Blue Moon” by Billie Holiday

What is a space-themed playlist without a “Blue Moon”? Originally written by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart in 1934, the song has been covered countless times over the decades, but no other hits with the soul of Billie Holiday’s 1952 take.

An eclipse song for the arty folk: “Starman” by David Bowie

If space is the final frontier, David Bowie knew of its powers—and on Tuesday, with a quick listen to “Starman,” we can all try a bit of his Ziggy Stardust.

An eclipse song for people very much in touch with the universe: “Space is the Place” by Sun Ra

The beauty of Sun Ra’s “Space is the Place” is that it’s taken from a 1970s Afrofuturist film of the same name. Start with the song and watching

the eclipse in real time, end with a screening.

A righteous eclipse song: “Eclipse” by Earl Sweatshirt

Consider the distorted, reversed production of Earl Sweatshirt’s short rap track as an interlude for this playlist — a palate cleanser with a message.

The “it isn’t an eclipse song, but it also isn’t not an eclipse song” eclipse song: “Moonlight” by Jay-Z

“Moonlight,” an undercelebrated cut from Jay-Z’s momentous 2017 album “4:44,” considers frequent exploitation of Black artists in entertainment. It’s not an eclipse song in a traditional sense but considering his once-in-a-lifetime star power—and that of his collaborators—it feels like a fitting inclusion.

A sexy eclipse song: “Moonlight” by Kali Uchis

Colombian American musician Kali Uchis’ songs center love, loss and divine femininity — and so does her hit “Moonlight.” In this sweet moment of pop astrology, the moon is a source of power.

An eclipse song for the Swiftie in your life: “Seven” by Taylor Swift

Looking up at the sky as a symbol of ambition, hope, nostalgia or innocence has a long literary history. It also functions as the perfect visual for Taylor Swift’s “Folklore” cut “Seven.” Swifties know what’s up.

An idyllic eclipse song: “Moonshadow” by Cat Stevens

What is more fitting for an afternoon eclipse than the soft folk stylings of Cat Stevens’ “Moonshadow”? It doubles as a great road trip song for country road driving, too, so for those who are traveling — take note.

Man can no longer support his ne'er-do-well brother

DEAR ABBY: My brother (eight years younger) has been hooked on drugs and in and out of jail for decades. Our father passed away five years ago. My brother lived with him in a different state until then. Prior to that, he stole from our mother and from me repeatedly. He’s a criminal and is currently in jail. When he’s not in jail, he is homeless. Of course, the only time we hear from him is when he needs money. To top it off, my special-needs son recently passed away. Of course, my wife and I are devastated, although we have come to terms with the fact that he is in a better place.

With my brother back in jail, the focus has gone back to him. I have always tried to be a good brother, but I have now completely washed my hands of him. At this point, I need peace in my life, and as long as he is in mine, I will never have it. This crushes my mother, but it’s how I feel. Right or wrong, I don’t feel that just because someone is family, it gives them the right to make others miserable. I would love to know your thoughts on this.

BETTER BROTHER IN FLORIDA

DEAR BROTHER: Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your beloved son. That you feel you cannot handle the added stress of interacting with or supporting

your drug-addicted brother (who has stolen from you) is understandable.

Do not allow your mother to guilt you into doing anything with which you are uncomfortable. If your mother decides to take him in when he’s released, caution her to first remove any items of value from her home.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: Four years ago, a former friend, “Karla,” offered me a nice oak side chair of hers. Karla said she had no use for it and assured me she wouldn’t want it back. I accepted the chair and have used it since then.

When it was given to me, the back cushion was missing and the seat cushion was hard. After a couple of years, I bought nice fabric and had the chair repaired and reupholstered. It cost me \$175. If I had thought the chair was on loan only, I wouldn’t have done that. I sent her a pic of the finished improvements, and she replied that it looked nice.

A year later, she abruptly ended our friendship. She was angry with me because I had confused her airport arrival time and she had to wait an hour. Twice I apologized profusely, but Karla has not responded. (That was 14 months ago.)

Ten days ago, I received a text from one of her friends, telling me Karla wants me to return the chair she “let me borrow.” The friend wanted to know when I could deliver it. I’m completely tak-

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



en aback. She GAVE it to me! What is your take on this pickle?

BAFFLED IN TEXAS

DEAR BAFFLED: Ignore the text. If Karla wants the chair returned, she should ask you herself. If she does, and if you agree to it, be sure she repays IN CASH the money you spent to have the chair refurbished.

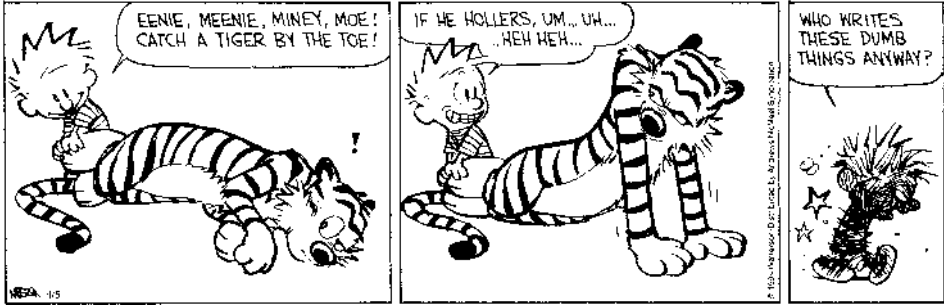
■■■

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Pastimes

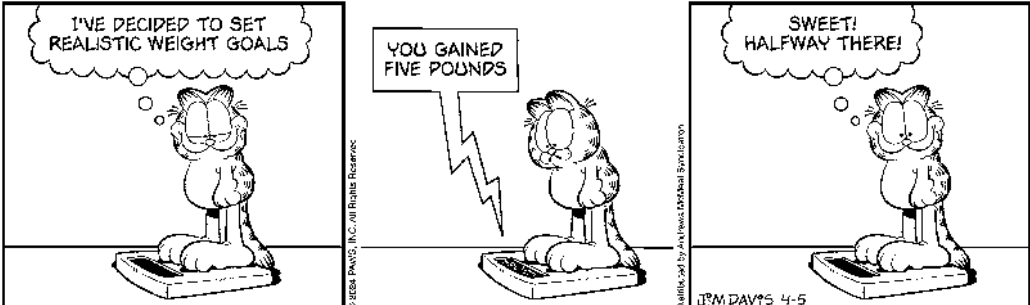
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



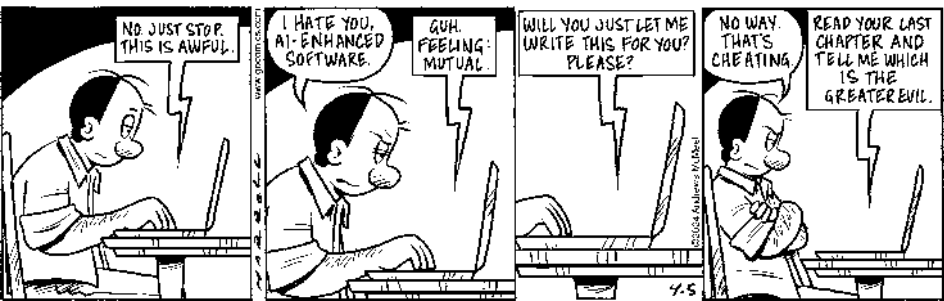
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



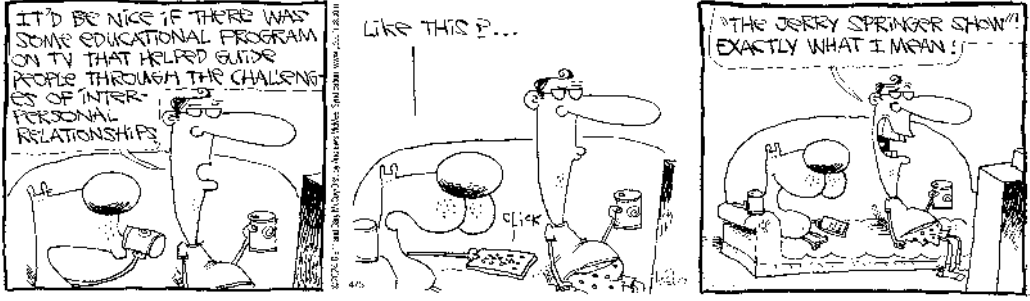
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 "Strange as it seems..." 35 Activist Chavez 56 SSW opposite 21 — kwon do

6 "Big Blue" 37 Roman 57 Tell 22 Rushmore face

9 Homer's area 41 Scepter 24 Biol. or chem.

12 "Old MacDonald" letters 43 Half of dos 26 Pliant

13 Soccer's Ham 45 Set afire 28 "Rubber Capital"

14 — Cruz 47 Pressing need 30 Agent

15 Tooth problem 49 Popular payment 32 Ease of speaking, as a language

16 Strength 52 Classic car 33 Aachen article

18 Wears away 53 MSN alter-native 34 Brazilian city

20 Poker type 54 Rainbow-shaped 36 Sock pattern

21 Sandy shade 55 Sun. talk 38 Eggs on

23 Lawn material 19 Ninnies 39 Che-

24 Dutch painter Jan 45 PC picture

25 Starting lineup? 46 Prefix with byte

27 Serenity 48 A Bobbsey twin

29 Pooh's mopey pal 50 Con-vened

31 Sutherland of "24" 51 Prefix with meter

Solution time: 25 mins.

Yesterday's answer 4-5

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Pharrell Williams, 51; Mike McCready, 58; Mitch Pileggi, 72; Agnetha Faltskog, 74.

Happy Birthday: Clear the air, speak from the heart and breathe easy. Leave nothing to chance or the imagination. Clarity will be the pivotal point in your life that motivates you to turn complicated matters into a simpler lifestyle with less drama. Trust your instincts & come up with innovative plans for stability. Make health and meaningful relationships your focus. Your numbers are 5, 14, 22, 28, 33, 42, 47.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Refuse to let anyone decide for you. Trust in your ability to notice what's best for you. Put more faith in how you present yourself to the world and what you offer. Presentation and enthusiasm will put you ahead of the competition. ****

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Call an expert and tie up loose ends. Get your facts straight before you make a move. Your confidence will change how others perceive you and how they are willing to put their faith in what you have to offer. Positive change is heading your way. ****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Rely on yourself, get your facts from the source and take precautions when injury, illness or loss are at stake. Hide your emotions when dealing with professional or money matters. Make decisions based on logistics. **

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Protect your health, reputation and position. Focus on learning, updating and expanding your goals. Your enthusiasm will lead to financial gains and opportunities to try something new and

exciting. Self-improvement is favored. *****
LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Stay focused on your responsibilities, and apply what you know and can do to get things right the first time. Educate yourself, practice and prepare to outsmart anyone who tries to outsmart or outdo you. Apply pressure where necessary and strive for perfection. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Send positive vibes, and the changes you want will resonate with others. How accommodating you are will determine the outcome of a pending situation. A change of plans or location will give insight into alternatives you may want to consider. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Set the stage to impress those you want to accommodate, and everything will fall into place. Your innovative approach to life and maintaining a positive balance between work and play will revive your faith in your goals. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Get out, network, mingle and converse with people heading in a similar direction. Let your mind wander and implement lifestyle changes that appeal to you and will encourage better results professionally and socially. Embrace change. *****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Bypass anyone trying to slow you down. Refrain from letting confusion set in due to gossip or misinformation. Stay on top of the facts and act accordingly. Focus on truth, aligning yourself with the right people and putting your energy where it will do the most good. *****

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Discipline will pay off; zero in on what's essential and what will help you reach your objective. Be ready to initiate change when least expected, and you'll open doors to help you surpass your goal. Listen to complaints when dealing with domestic matters and avoid the consequences. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): A little pressure will pay off, but too much, and you'll face setbacks. Communication will help clear up misunderstandings and help you find common ground when trying to reach a goal you share with someone close. Pay attention and do something nice for someone you love. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Show no fear, focus on your target and make changes to contribute to your sanity. It's time to call the shots. Stop bending; head in a direction that leads to your desired lifestyle. Advocate for what's important to you, and enjoy the outcome. ***

Birthday Baby: You are friendly, informative and ambitious. You are accommodating and pioneering. **☾:** Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. **☼:** You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. **☼☼:** Focus and you'll reach your goals. **☼☼☼:** Aim high; start new projects. **☼☼☼☼:** Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

6					2		1	4		
1				8	6	7				
4			1			3				
	5			1			2			
		3		4				5		
				6						
		2							9	
3			8							
		9	6		3				8	

Difficulty: ★★★★★

4/5

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	6	5	9	1	4	8	2	3
4	3	8	7	2	5	6	9	1
9	1	2	3	6	8	4	5	7
3	2	9	1	4	6	7	8	5
6	7	4	5	8	9	1	3	2
5	8	1	2	7	3	9	4	6
8	4	3	6	5	1	2	7	9
1	5	7	8	9	2	3	6	4
2	9	6	4	3	7	5	1	8

Difficulty: ★★

4/5

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID QUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

BOK CHOY

Solution: 6 letters

L	S	E	C	I	P	S	V	I	T	A	M	I	N	S
R	E	T	C	A	S	H	E	W	W	S	A	L	A	D
G	A	M	I	N	K	R	O	P	M	E	A	S	G	R
N	G	M	O	R	D	E	K	O	O	C	H	O	A	E
I	I	I	E	N	F	D	O	E	C	I	R	C	R	D
N	N	C	I	N	G	R	E	D	I	E	N	T	L	N
O	G	O	I	S	H	R	Y	T	R	H	E	O	I	E
S	E	D	E	S	O	R	A	O	E	E	E	F	C	T
A	R	D	U	V	A	K	R	S	T	A	R	U	T	N
E	I	M	A	M	E	O	E	S	S	L	G	U	O	A
S	P	L	E	P	P	S	N	N	Y	T	A	O	L	L
T	F	I	O	T	C	L	N	I	O	H	D	S	L	P
E	I	H	C	M	I	K	I	A	U	L	L	O	A	G
A	C	H	F	E	E	B	D	N	E	Q	I	U	H	G
M	C	H	A	R	R	E	D	S	G	B	M	P	S	E

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Beans, Beef, Bite, Cashew, Charred, Chew, Chop, Cooked, Dinner, Dish, Dumpling, Eggplant, Flavor, Garlic, Ginger, Green, Health, Ingredient, Kimchi, Lemongrass, Mild, Mushrooms, Noodles, Onions, Oyster, Pork, Quinoa, Ramen, Recipe, Rice, Roast, Salad, Salt, Seasoning, Shallot, Shiitake, Shred, Sides, Soup, Spice, Steam, Stir-fry, Tender, Tofu, Toss, Vitamins
Yesterday's Answer: Sweet Apricot
The NEW TELEWORD VINTAGE COLLECTION #1 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367.)

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Trail Blazers beat Hornets to snap 10-game losing skid



CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Scoot Henderson had 22 points and 10 assists and the Portland Trail Blazers beat Brandon Miller and the Charlotte Hornets 89-86 on Wednesday night in a matchup of two of the league's top three draft picks.

Henderson, the third overall pick, shot 9 of 17 from the field as the Trail Blazers snapped a 10-game losing streak. Deandre Ayton had a monster game against the Hornets with 24 points and 16 rebounds and Jabari Walker had 14 points and 22 rebounds.

With Charlotte's two 7-foot centers out, the Blazers held a 55-36 edge on the glass.

Miller finished with 21 points to lead the Hornets, but struggled from long range finishing 1 of 8 from 3-point range. Charlotte shot 5 of 31 from beyond the arc just hours after Steve Clifford announced that he is stepping down as head coach after the season.

LAKERS 125, WIZARDS 120

WASHINGTON (AP)—Anthony Davis scored 19 of his 35 points in the first quarter and had 18 rebounds, helping the Los Angeles Lakers beat Washington for their eighth victory in nine games.

LeBron James had 25 points and nine assists, and Rui Hachimura scored 19 points for the Lakers against his former team. Davis was 10 of 17 from the field and made 15 free throws without a miss.

Jordan Poole led Washington with 29.

The Lakers are ninth in the Western Conference, meaning

they'd have to win twice in the play-in tournament to make the main playoff bracket. But they're making a push to move up. Los Angeles trailed Phoenix and Sacramento by 1 1/2 games entering Wednesday.

HAWKS 121, PISTONS 113

ATLANTA (AP)—Jalen Johnson had 28 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists for his first career triple-double and Atlanta Hawks overcame a 50-point effort by Detroit's Malachi Flynn for a win over the Pistons on Wednesday night that clinched a berth in the Eastern Conference play-in tournament.

De'Andre Hunter scored 26 points and Dejounte Murray finished with 24 points and 11 assists for the Hawks, who have won six of their last seven games.

Flynn, whose previous career high was 27, was 18 for 25 from the floor and 9 for 12 at the line. The 50 points was a franchise record for a reserve. He also had a season-high six rebounds, five assists and five steals in 34 minutes.

The Pistons have lost 10 of their last 11 games.

CELTICS 135, THUNDER 100

BOSTON (AP)—Kristaps Porzingis had 27 points, 12 rebounds and five blocks, helping Boston power past Oklahoma City to secure the best record in the NBA and homecourt advantage throughout the playoffs.

Jayson Tatum finished with 24 points and Jaylen Brown added 23 points and seven rebounds for Boston, which



Portland Trail Blazers guard Scoot Henderson brings the ball upcourt during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Charlotte Hornets Wednesday, April 3, 2024, in Charlotte, N.C.

won its 11th consecutive home game and improved to 60-16 on the season.

The Celtics trailed for only 62 seconds in the game.

Boston led by as many as 16 in the first half before Oklahoma City cut it to six points in the third quarter. Leading by 10 after three, the Celtics opened the fourth with a 12-4 run to stretch their lead to 105-87.

NETS 115, PACERS 111

NEW YORK (AP)—Cam Thomas scored 27 points, rookie Noah Clowney had a

career-high 22 and Brooklyn outlasted Indiana to split a home-and-home set.

The Nets were eliminated from postseason contention when Atlanta beat Detroit at home to wrap up at least a spot in the NBA Play-In Tournament. Brooklyn last missed the playoffs in 2017-18.

Mikal Bridges added 17 points, and Nic Claxton had 14 points and 13 rebounds. The Nets had lost their previous two games, the last a 133-111 loss in Indianapolis on Monday night.

Pascal Siakam scored 26 points and Tyrese Haliburton had for Indiana. The Pacers had won three in a row.

GRIZZLIES 111, BUCKS 101

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 35 points to lead Memphis to a victory over Milwaukee.

The Bucks lost for the fourth time in their past five games as they've faltered while trying to hold on to the No. 2 seed in the Eastern Conference.

Jackson dominated in the second half, scoring 25 of his

points while lifting the Grizzlies to their fifth straight victory over Milwaukee.

Brook Lopez paced the Bucks with 25 points and 10 rebounds while Giannis Antetokounmpo added 21 points, seven rebounds and eight assists. Bobby Portis had 19 points and Malik Beasley had 10.

TIMBERWOLVES 133, RAPTORS 85

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Anthony Edwards scored 28 points, Naz Reid added 23 and Minnesota routed short-handed Toronto to move into a tie for first-place in the Western Conference.

The Timberwolves began the day tied with Oklahoma City for second in the West, one-half game behind first-place Denver. Minnesota's win moved it into a tie with the idle Nuggets with six games remaining for both teams.

Rudy Gobert had 11 points and 15 rebounds for Minnesota, whose 48-point win marked its largest margin of victory this season.

MAGIC 117, PELICANS 108

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Paolo Banchero scored 32 points and Orlando defeated New Orleans.

Franz Wagner scored 24 points and Moritz Wagner added 18 points for the Magic, who've won three straight and moved a half-game ahead of the idle New York Knicks for fourth in the Eastern Conference.

CJ McCollum had 36 points and 10 rebounds for New Orleans, which has lost three straight and four of five, slipping from fourth to sixth in the Western Conference, just half a game in front of seventh-place Sacramento.

SUNS 122, CAVALIERS 101

PHOENIX (AP)—Devin Booker scored 40 points, Kevin Durant added 32 and Phoenix beat Cleveland.

The Suns have won six of their past eight, moving up to the No. 6 spot in a crowded Western Conference playoff race, which would allow them to avoid the play-in tournament.

Booker - coming off a 52-point night in a win against New Orleans on Monday - shot 13 of 25 from the field, including 5 of 9 from 3-point range. Durant shot 13 of 23 and added seven assists.

It's just the second time this season that Booker and Durant have both scored at least 30 in the same game. Bol Bol added 15 points off the bench, making 3 of 4 3-pointers.

Embiid admits to 'being depressed' following latest time off from 76ers with injuries

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Joel Embiid spent two full seasons and chunks of so many others recovering, rehabbing, even resting—thanks, load management—during his NBA career that the Philadelphia 76ers star should by now almost be used to sitting on the sidelines.

The consequences of the time off from his latest injury, a torn meniscus in his left knee that needed surgery and cost him two months of the season, hit different.

"Usually, when I have injuries, I just tell myself, 'Move on to the next one. Get better and fix it,'" Embiid said. "This one, it took a toll mentally. Being depressed. It was not a good one. Still not where I'm supposed to be, especially mentally. But I just love to play. Love basketball and I want to play. Any chance that I can be out there, I'm going to take it."

Embiid at least felt the

love in Philly.

He was warmly greeted by Hall of Famer Allen Iverson and nearly 21,000 Sixers fans that roared for his introduction and chanted "MVP! MVP!" throughout the game in his first game in nine weeks. Embiid scored 24 points, had seven assists, six rebounds and made the decisive four free throws in the final 40 seconds that led the 76ers to a 109-105 win over the Oklahoma City Thunder on Tuesday night.

The reigning NBA MVP, Embiid was cleared to return ahead of the game and played for the first time since he was injured in the Sixers' last game of January. The Sixers plummeted in the Eastern Conference standings without him. A team playing for a top-four spot in the East before Embiid's injury, the Sixers are 14-27 overall without him this season and 11-18 since he was injured in a Jan. 30 loss at Golden State.

Embiid—wearing a WWE

T-shirt gifted to him ahead of WrestleMania by former wrestler Triple H—could not pinpoint exactly what led to his bouts with depression. But the blow of yet another injury and the struggle of watching the Sixers lose game after game without him, took a toll on his mental health.

"It took me a while to get over it," Embiid said. "I still haven't gotten over it. I've just got to take it day-by-day. Look at the positives. I'm back. Hopefully, every single day I'll try and get better and get back to myself."

The 30-year-old Embiid said he leaned on his wife and young son to push him through the hard days. He took his 3 1/2-year-old son, Arthur, to and from school and Embiid played with him "all day" to take his mind off the fact his NBA career was on hold.

"Basketball obviously means a lot and I love it and I love to play," Embiid said. "It's

the best thing for me. But family also comes first. It's the thing that got me through it."

Embiid admitted to exhaustion and closed out the game sitting on the scorer's table. After a hard fall late in the game, the 7-footer lay on his back for several moments before allowing teammates to yank him up.

"I thought I could have been better," Embiid said.

Sixers fans were ready for the All-Star center's return. His hair in braids, Embiid received a roaring ovation when he was introduced in the starting lineup. Embiid had started the day listed as out on the injury report before he was upgraded to questionable by late afternoon.

"I want to get him out there and evaluate where we're at," coach Nick Nurse said.

The Sixers entered Tuesday eighth in the East with seven games left this season and seem poised to make the play-in tournament. The No. 7 seed plays No. 8. The winner is in

and gets the No. 7 seed for the playoffs. The loser has a second chance.

"I usually don't worry about the seeding stuff," Nurse said. "There is some common sense here that we need to get this team ready, whatever that means, to be the best they can be, if there's a postseason."

Embiid, a two-time NBA scoring champion, has averaged 35.3 points and 11.5 rebounds this season. He scored a franchise-record 70 points to go along with 18 rebounds on Jan. 22 in a 133-124 victory over San Antonio.

"The hype is real," teammate Kelly Oubre Jr. said. "He's one of the most dominant players the NBA has ever seen."

Embiid had meniscus surgery on Feb. 6 after Golden State's Jonathan Kuminga fell on the 7-footer's left leg. Before that, Embiid had been held out because of left knee swelling in Philadelphia's two previous games.

Orioles walk off Royals after five-hour delay due to rain

BALTIMORE (AP)—

James McCann had a two-out, two-run single in the ninth inning and Baltimore emerged from a five-hour rain delay to beat Kansas City.

It was 3-2 in the ninth when Royals closer Will Smith (0-2) walked Ryan Mountcastle and gave up a single to Anthony Santander. After a sacrifice bunt, an intentional walk to load the bases and a strikeout, McCann lined a single into left to end it.

Maikel Garcia homered and Salvador Perez had three hits and two RBIs for the Royals, who lost both games in the series on Baltimore's final at-bat.

RANGERS 4, RAYS 1
ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Nathan Eovaldi struck out eight in seven shutout innings. Corey Seager homered and the Texas Rangers beat the Tampa Bay Rays 4-1 on Wednesday.

Eovaldi (1-0) scattered four hits and walked one, throwing 103 pitches. After going 5-0 during the Rangers' postseason run to last year's World Series title, the 34-year-old right-hander has allowed two runs in 13 innings this season for a 1.38 ERA.

Seager broke a scoreless tie with a leadoff homer in the sixth off Aaron Civale (1-1) and Josh Smith added a two-run single during a three-run ninth against Garrett Cleavinger.

Struggling Rangers reliever Jose Leclerc gave up an RBI single to Harold Ramirez in the ninth. After Jose Caballero hit a flyout to the warning track with two on, Curtis Mead hit a game-ending comebacker.

Civale allowed one run, four hits and two walks to go with eight strikeouts in six innings.

ANGELS 10, MARLINS 2
MIAMI (AP)—Taylor Ward homered, Nolan Schanuel extended his career-starting consecutive on-base streak to 35 games, as Los Angeles Angels beat Miami, sending the Marlins to their first winless seven-game homestand and worst start in franchise history.

Angels starter Patrick Sandoval struck out seven over 5 2/3 innings and overcame an opening day outing in which he allowed five runs in 1 2/3 innings. Sandoval (1-1) limited Miami to two runs and four hits. The left-hander absorbed a 101.9 mph comebacker to his left foot hit by Miami's Vidal Brujan in the third but remained in the game.

Ward also had two singles and two RBIs, Miguel Sanjurjo doubled and walked twice and Zach Neto had two hits and two RBIs.

Schanuel extended his streak when he was hit by a pitch in the ninth inning. He



Baltimore Orioles' James McCann (27) celebrates with Gunnar Henderson (2) and others after McCann hit a walk-off single that drove in two runs during the ninth inning of a baseball game against the Kansas City Royals, Wednesday, April 3, 2024, in Baltimore.

is third on the MLB all-time list for consecutive games reaching base to start a career. Alvin Davis (1984) is first at 47 games and Truck Hannah (1918) is second at 38 games. Schanuel also had an RBI on a sacrifice fly in the seventh inning.

TWINS 7, BREWERS 3
MILWAUKEE (AP)—Jackson Chourios became the youngest player in six years to hit a home run but it wasn't enough for Milwaukee, who lost to Minnesota, as Ryan Jeffers hit a tiebreaking three-run drive to cap a five-run seventh inning.

Rhys Hoskins also went deep for the Brewers, who lost their first game after a 4-0 start.

Minnesota's Alex Kiriloff went 4 for 4 with two singles, a double and a triple. Jeffers had four RBIs for the Twins. Chourios led off the fifth by connecting on Daniel Duarte's 1-1 slider for a 402-foot drive.

RED SOX 1, ATHLETICS 0
OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Nick Pivetta combined with four relievers on Boston's second shutout of the series, Emmanuel Valdez hit a sacrifice fly in the fourth inning and the Red Sox beat Oakland to complete a three-game sweep.

Jarren Duran went 4 for 4 and raised his batting average to .393.

Ross Stripling (0-2) gave up eight hits in seven innings and lost his seventh consecutive decision since beating Toronto on Oct. 1, 2022.

GUARDIANS 8, MARINERS 0
SEATTLE (AP)—Logan Allen scattered four hits over 6 2/3 shutout innings, Steven Kwan had three hits and scored three times in his first three at-bats, and Cleveland continued their hot start with a win over the Seattle Mariners.

The Guardians continued to thump opposing pitchers, battering Seattle starter George Kirby for a career-high eight earned runs, although he wasn't helped by his defence. But Cleveland hit the ball hard against Kirby and stacked together three big innings to take its second straight series.

Allen (2-0) gave up J.P. Crawford's infield single leading off the first inning, then didn't allow another hit until Ty France's single with two outs in the fourth. The lefty followed the game plan of using off-speed and breaking pitches against the Mariners, which has continued from last season to be Seattle's weakness at the plate.

PADRES 3, CARDINALS 2
SAN DIEGO, Calif. (AP)—Kyle Higashioka caught two baserunners stealing and homered in the same inning to help Joe Musgrove and San Diego beat the St. Louis and avoid a three-game sweep.

Higashioka became the fifth catcher since 1961 to catch multiple runners stealing and hit a home run in the same inning.

He threw out Brendan Donovan trying to steal second base during a strike-out-throw-em-out double play in the fourth. After Willson Contreras doubled and Nolan Arenado singled, Higashioka threw out Arenado trying to steal second, which was upheld on review.

Batting with one out in the bottom of the inning, Higashioka took three straight balls to run the count full against left-hander Zack Thompson (0-2) and then drove a 90-mph fastball into the seats in left. It was his first homer since Aug. 29 at Detroit.

Musgrove (1-1) held the Cardinals to one run and five hits in six innings, with seven strikeouts and one walk.

YANKEES 6, DIAMONDBACKS 5, 11 INNINGS

PHOENIX (AP)—Aaron Judge hit his first home run of the season and added an RBI double in a two-run 11th inning, boosting New York over Arizona.

Alex Verdugo broke a 2-2 tie in the 10th with his first Yankees home run, a two-run drive off Kevin Ginkel. Arizona tied the score in the bottom half off Clay Holmes (1-0), helped by shortstop Anthony Volpe's throwing error.

With runners at the corners in the 11th following Gleyber Torres' single, Scott McGough (0-1) balked in the go-ahead run when he failed to come to a set position with Juan Soto at the plate. After Soto flied out, Judge lined a double for a two-run lead.

Arizona closed in the bottom of the 11th when Jorge Barrosa hit a two-out, RBI single. Because of previous moves by manager Torey Lovullo, the D-backs didn't have a designated hitter and had to use McGough as a hitter with the bases loaded. He took a called third strike from Caleb Ferguson, who got his first save this season.

NATIONALS 5, PIRATES 3
WASHINGTON (AP)—Joey Gallo emphatically ended an 0-for-12 season-opening drought with an upper-deck homer that travelled 447 feet and two other hits, and Washington beat Pittsburgh.

Luis Garcia Jr. doubled three times to tie a Nationals record and scored twice, CJ Abrams had a pair of RBIs, and Trevor Williams (1-0) allowed two runs in 5 1/3 innings on a rainy evening in front of an announced crowd of 14,022.

Michael A. Taylor hit a two-run single for the Pirates, and

Jack Suwinski homered off lefty reliever Robert Garcia in the sixth.

REDS 4, PHILLIES 1
PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Christian Encarnacion-Strand and Elly De La Cruz had RBI doubles, Frankie Montas pitched 5 2/3 innings and Cincinnati beat Philadelphia after a long rain delay.

The game was originally scheduled for the afternoon, but the start was pushed back three hours because of heavy rain in the forecast. Then the teams waited out an additional delay of 3 hour, 55-minutes - the second-longest stoppage in the 20-year history of Citizens Bank Park.

Montas (2-0) allowed one run on five hits. Alexis Diaz pitched a the ninth for his first save.

Cincinnati had six hits - five for extra bases. Encarnacion-Strand plated two runs with a double off Philadelphia starter Zack Wheeler in the third inning, and Jake Fraley and De La Cruz hit back-to-back doubles off Wheeler in the sixth inning to score the third run. Nick Martini added an RBI single in the ninth.

Kyle Schwarber hit a solo home run on a first pitch four-seamer from Montas in the sixth inning for the Phillies. He extended his hitting streak to five games with his second homer of the year.

ASTROS 8, BLUE JAYS 0
HOUSTON (AP)—Yordan Alvarez homered twice and matched his career high with four hits, Cristian Javier and four relievers combined on a one-hitter and Houston beat Toronto.

Javier (1-0) allowed the only hit and pitched five innings. Seth Martinez, Rafael Montero, Tayler Scott and Dylan Coleman worked an inning each.

It's the second game in the

series where the Blue Jays were shut out after Ronel Blanco threw the 17th no-hitter in franchise history in a 10-0 victory Monday night.

It was a breakout night for Alvarez, who entered Wednesday having hit just three singles in the first six games. It was the 16th career multi-homer game for the Cuban and the sixth time he's had four hits.

Daulton Varsho doubled with one out in the second for Toronto's only hit. The Blue Jays walked seven times but couldn't get anything going at the plate.

CUBS 9, ROCKIES 8
CHICAGO (AP)—Seiya Suzuki homered in his second straight game and drove in four runs and the Chicago Cubs regrouped to beat Colorado after blowing a six-run lead.

The Cubs looked as if they were on their way to another easy win with an 8-2 lead in the sixth after outscoring the Rockies by a combined 17-2 in the first two games. Colorado made a big push, scoring a run in the seventh and five in the eighth to tie it.

Pinch-hitter Miles Mastrobuoni reached on a wild pitch by Nick Mears (0-1) as he struck out leading off the bottom half. He took third on a single by Ian Happ and beat the throw home on Suzuki's fielder's choice grounder to third baseman Ryan McMahon to put Chicago back on top.

DODGERS 5, GIANTS 4
LOS ANGELES (AP)—Shohei Ohtani hit his first home run for Los Angeles, a solo drive in the seventh inning in a win over the San Francisco Giants that finished a three-game sweep.

Playing his ninth game for his new team, Ohtani pulled a 93.2 mph sinker from left-hander Taylor Rogers on the upper, outer portion of the strike zone into the right-center field pavilion. The ball left his bat at 105.6 mph and landed 430 feet from the plate, where it was picked up by a fan.

Tyler Glasnow (2-0) retired 15 of his first 18 batters before faltering in the sixth. He gave up three runs and four hits with seven strikeouts and two walks.

Joe Kelly pitched the seventh and Daniel Hudson the eighth before Dinelson Lamet finished the five-hitter by striking out two in a perfect ninth for his first professional save.

Miguel Rojas also homered and drove in two runs for the Dodgers, who won their fourth straight game and improved to 7-2.

Jorge Soler and Patrick Bailey hit solo home runs for the Giants, who have lost four straight and dropped to 2-5. San Francisco has dropped 14 of its last 19 against the Dodgers.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

SFA's Mahi Derby postponed anew



The Saipan Fishermen's Association's 20th Mahi Fishing Derby that was set for March 2 and was initially rescheduled to this Saturday, April 6, has been reset anew to April 13 at the Smiling Cove Marina.

Due to a Small Craft Advisory for their original date of March 2, SFA deemed it safer to reschedule it to a later date of April 6. However, that date has been postponed anew due to "deteriorating weather conditions."

"Safety and enjoyment are the SFA's primary focus with all derby and tournament events and this unforeseen weather circumstance is no exception. We are constantly monitoring local and national weather applications and bulletins for optimal fishing condi-

tions. Thank you for your kind understanding and we'll be ready for April 13th! Fish on!" said SFA in a statement.

Last year's derby was also pushed back due to inclement weather.

The prize for first place is \$2,500, second receives \$1,500, and third place gets \$1,000. Fourth and fifth place gets in-kind prizes.

SFA is anticipating about 64 boats in this derby. Last year's derby had 52 boats, with first place won by the boat 10-7 captained by Keith Torres with their 26.2-lb catch; second was the boat *Ka Fish On* with a 22.2-lb mahi captained by Manuel Mogar; and third was the boat *Victoria* with a 22-lb haul captained by Diego Benavente.

The \$2,200 side bet was won by the *Le'Ana Vae* with their monster 70.5-lb wahoo.



The crewmembers of 10-7 pose with their first-place plaque and check for \$2,500 with SFA officials at the awards ceremony of the Saipan Fisherman's Association 19th Annual Mahi Fishing Derby at the Smiling Cove Marina last year.

LEIGH GASES

VIVID

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against MP United, 2-1; then defeated Shirley's, 5-0; after, they beat Kanoa, 2-0; they then blanked Shirley's once more in the playoffs, 6-0.

Each team's most valuable player awardees were Taiga Namai-Scoggins of MPU; Kota Adachi of Vivid Blue;

Aldric Antonio of Kanoa FC, and Patrick McDonald of Shirley's FC.

Vivid Blue not only clinched the championship, but collected two individual awards. The Golden Boot Award went to Reiru Okawa, while the Golden Glove Award was Masaharu.

The Fairplay Award went to Shirley's FC.

The sponsors of the event were IT&E, Chong's Corp., Tan Siu Lin Foundation, NMI-FA, Marpac, iSHOP, Shirley's Coffee Shop, and Sea Touch.

The homestay families included Martin and Sarka Jambor family, Shawna and Nick Brennfleck family, Mika George family, Kyoung Min Song family, and Jerry and Lydia Tan family.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Japan's Vivid Blue soccer player aims and kicks the ball during a game in the Pacific Ocean Cup XIII 2024 last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Japan's Vivid Blue soccer player, left, tries to maneuver past a Shirley's Football Club player during the Pacific Ocean Cup XIII 2024 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Saturday.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Japan's Vivid Blue soccer player tries to make a play as Kanoa Football Club defends during a game in the Pacific Ocean Cup XIII 2024 last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center

TARS

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garero was without peer on hole No. 3. Ditto for Joe "Kamikaze" Camacho on hole No. 7, while father-and-son Ben Jones Sr. and Darion Jones lorded it over on holes No. 13 and 17, respectively.

On Round 2, Louie Tilipao prevented a shutout by former junior golfer Balajadia as he reigned supreme on hole No. 4, while Balajadia took the plums on holes No. 7, 11, and 15.

TOMAS

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The men's 3.0 first place is Daniel Kang with a 1,750 total. Second is Haoyang Song at 1,500, and John Bradley is third at 1,200.

Stella Choi is first in the women's 3.0 at a 1,000 total, with Hua Jin next at 875. Mei Rengiil is third with 838.

In the women's 2.0 rankings, Soung Mi Yang is first at 1,000, with Wei Tang in second at 750, and Lydia Lee in third with 500.

The women's 35+ first place is Mae Kim with 1,000, then Ming Pascual with 900, and Thu Tran with 600.

Paul Jang and Edwin Simbulan tops the men's 40+ at 1,000 each, followed by Brian Wessel with 900.

Lydia Tan and Annie Lai are at 250 each in the women's 40+, followed by Yuko Kumada and Harumi Suzuki with 200 each.

Dong Min Lee rules the men's 50+ with 1,200, followed by Wessel at 938, and Renato Espanolo with 725.

Tan leads the women's 50+ with 250, followed by Eunkyo-ung Lee at 200, and Sally Lee with 150.

John Bradley is first in the men's 60+ division with 1,250. Jeff Race and Dong Min Lee are at 1,000 each.

In the boys 18U, David Kwon is on top with 3,125; June Yu is next at 2,200; and Simon Tang is third with 2,150.

Serin is first again in the girls 18U with 3,175, followed by Anne Lee with 2,500, and Chae at 1,650.

Siwoo Lee has the high-

est total in the boys 16U with 4,200, with Yu in a distant second at 3,375, then Wessel at 2,900.

Hoo Wang ruled the girls 16U with a flat 5,000 total. Anne Lee is second with 4,225, and third is Irin at 3,700.

In the boys 14U, Matthew Hwang is first at 3,835; second is Ian Chae with 3,750, and third is Jihun Park with 3,200.

Emma Lang reigns in the girls 14U at 3,700, followed by Stella Choi at 3,150, and Vivian Chung with 2,800.

Jinho Cody Park is first in

the boys 12U with 5,875; second is Michael Jeon at 4,875; and third is Daniel Kang with 3,250.

Scarlett Loken has a 3,000 total for first in the girls 12U, and Selina Chi and Vivian Chung are at 1,500 each.

In the boys 10U, Cooper Koning-Fong is tied with Dongmin Jang with 1,500 total, followed by Jae Hun Jason Choi at 1,200.

Lastly, Fiona Yu is first in the girls 10U with 3,000, with Aileen Kim at 2,100, and Jiyun Lee with 1,000.



Trail Blazers beat Hornets to snap 10-game losing skid

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Vivid Blue champs of Pacific Oceania Cup XIII



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pacific Ocean Cup XIII participants pose for a group photo at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Saturday.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Japan's Vivid Blue are the champions of the Pacific Ocean Cup XIII 2024 after defeating Kanoa Football Club, 1-0, last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Both teams came out of the starting gun running—eager to land a goal first. Vivid Blue was relentless with their attempts just as Kanoa was but

none stuck until Fukawa Masaharu found an opening in the 11th minute.

If Kanoa didn't hustle enough then, they hustled

more than ever to catch up. Several exchanges near the net came up empty though and it was still a 1-0 lead for Vivid Blue heading into the second half.

Masaharu's lone goal came out to be vital as it clinched the championship for them after Kanoa's long standing scoreless drought.

After a long battle on the pitch, Kanoa failed to even up the score and settled for second place.

Vivid Blue, along with Ma-

saharu was made up of Reiru Okawa, Koharu Watanabe, Tominga Ryosei, Sato Keigo, Fukawa Masachika, Futo Okawa, Adachi Kota, and Kurebayashi Hayato.

Their head coach was Tahara Sachiko and their assistant coach was Soeda Manato.

Third place went to Shirley's FC and fourth place was MP United FC.

Vivid Blue was perfect in the preliminary round, winning all its matches—first

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Tars Olopai rules March tourney

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR

Tars Olopai was the king of the mountain in the Refaluwasch Golf Association Ace of the Month Tournament last March.

The veteran golfer scored a two-round total of net 138 after twin 69s in the first and second rounds, both at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

In the first round on the west course last March 9, Olopai shot a 41 in the first nine holes and a 38 in the back nine with birdies in holes No. 14 and 17 for a gross score of 79 for the 10-handicapper.

Then in the second round last March 16 on the east course, he also shot 41-38 in the first nine and the last nine holes with 1-unders in holes No. 14 and 16.

"The course was well maintained and the weather was dry and windy. I was consistently hitting my driver and short game in

a playable manner. It was my putting that helped my game those two days," said Olopai when asked about his March triumph.

Olopai said he picked up golf at a young age and used to play with *tangan-tangan* as clubs like his old dear departed friend Mr. Unorthodox, Jess Wabol.

"I recall, maybe I was about 12 years old when I started playing this game. It kind of left me

no choice due to the fact that our backyard was the first golf course on island, the Whispering Palms golf course in Chalan Kiya (Now Saipan Vegas golf course). That's how I learned the game."

Carl Hocog and Fr. James Balajadia finished second and third to Olopai with net scores of 139 (68-71) and 141 (69-72), respectively.

In the closest to the pin on Round 1, Manny Man-

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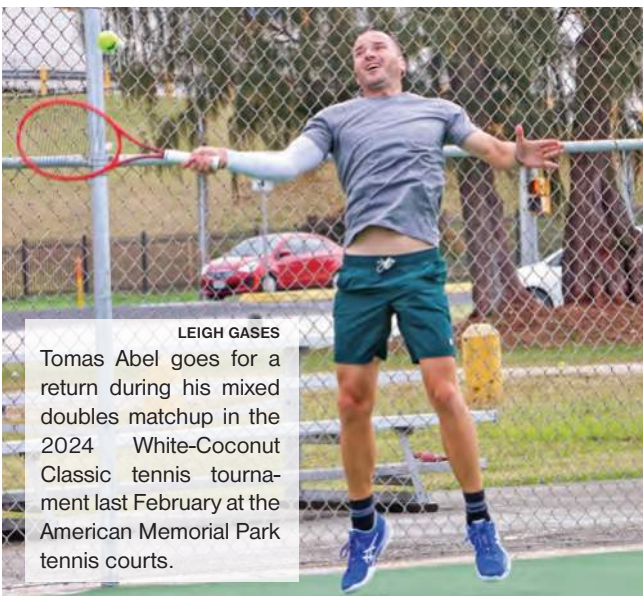


Tomas, Serin lead 2023-2024 open rankings



LEIGH GASES

Serin Chung returns a serve by Hannah Chae during their finals match in the U18 division of the 2024 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament last January at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.



LEIGH GASES

Tomas Abel goes for a return during his mixed doubles matchup in the 2024 White-Coconut Classic tennis tournament last February at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Tomas Abel and Serin Chung lead their respective open division in the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association 2023-2024 individual rankings.

In the men's open division, Abel racked up a 2,900 total after he received 1,000 points in the TanHoldings Tennis Classic, 400 points in the SIS

Student Council Tennis Tournament, 1,000 points in the White Coconut Classic, and 500 points in the Bridge Capital Tennis Classic.

Second was Colin Ramsey with a 2,550-point total. He collected 750 points in the THTC, 200 points in the THTC doubles, 1,000 points in the SIS SCTT, and 600 points in the BCTC.

Third place went to David Kwon who has a 1,750 total. He gathered 500 points in the THTC, 250 in the THTC dou-

bles, 500 in the SIS SCTT, 250 in the SIS SCTT doubles, and 250 points in the BCTC.

Chung, for her part, outscored everyone in the women's open division with a total of 2,750. She had 750 points in the THTC, 250 in the THTC doubles, 150 in the SIS SCTT doubles, 1,000 in the WCC, and 600 points in the BCTC.

The younger Chung, Irin, is in second place with her 2,000 total after 1,000 points in the THTC, 250 in the THTC doubles, and 750 in the WCC.

Third is Hannah Chae at 1,600. She gathered 300 in the THTC, 200 in the THTC mixed, 600 in the WCC, and 500 in the BCTC.

The men's 4.0 first place is Quintin Ramsey with a 1,050 total. Cody Shimizu and La Hunn Lam are tied with 1,000 each; and Wataru Kadokura is at 700 points.

Claire Park topped the women's 4.0 with a 250 total. Second is Yebin Shin at 200, and third is Seiyul Hong with 150.

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Olopai